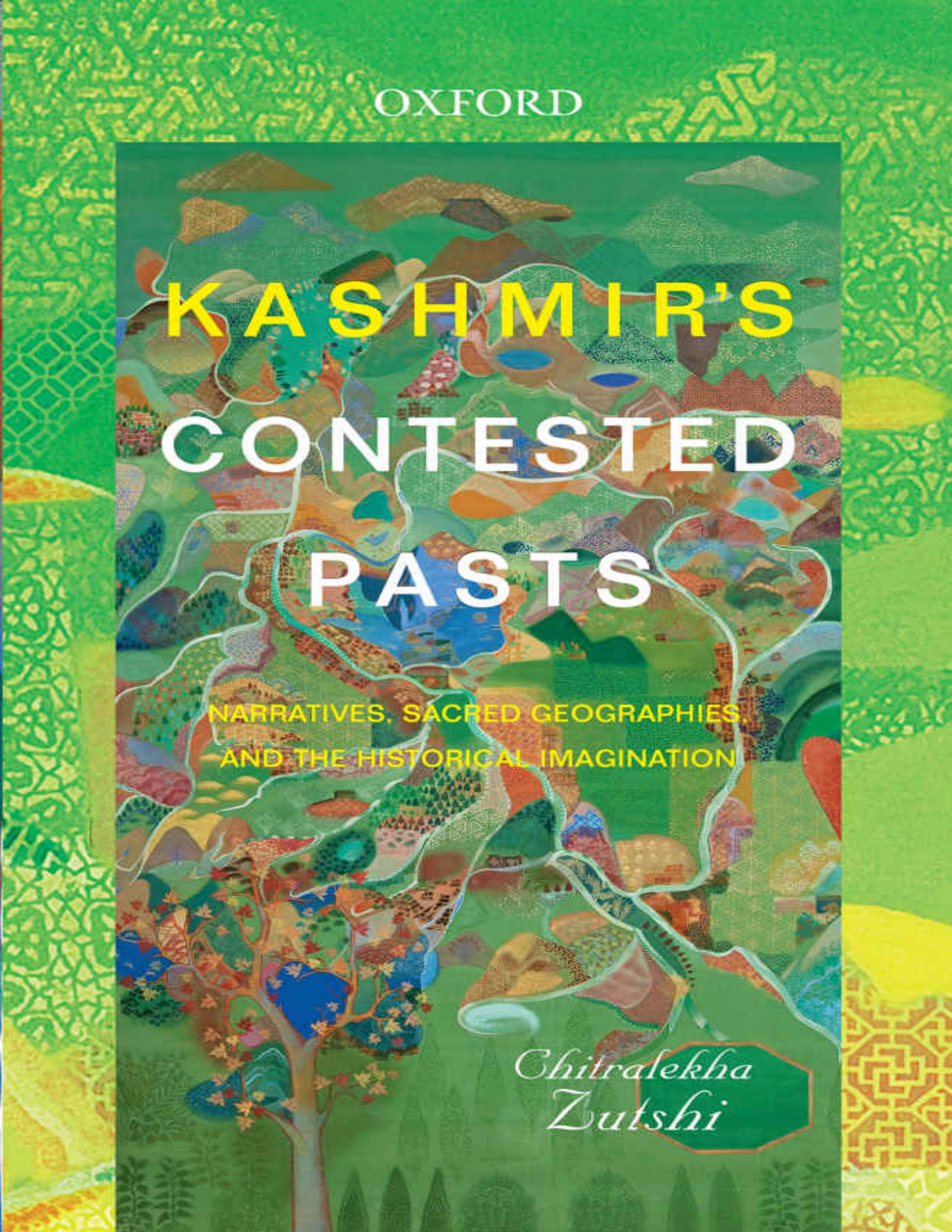
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KASHMIR'S CONTESTED PASTS
NARRATIVES, SACRED GEOGRAPHIES, AND THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION
Chitralekha Zutshi

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In memory of my grandparents

Arundhati and Madho Lal Zutshi
Lakshmi and Lakshman Kaul

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Chitralekha Zutshi
Williamsburg, Virginia

INTRODUCTION

Paradise on Earth: The Past and Present of History-Writing in Kashmir

In the beginning there was a lake called Satisar. It was named after the goddess Sati, who lived on the mountain peak Harmukh with her husband, Lord Shiva, and took boat rides on the lake, and promenaded on its shores. In the lake lived the demon, Jalodhbhava (born of water), who had been granted a boon after years of penance by Lord Brahma that he would be invincible in water. As a result, Jalodhbhava was ruthless in consuming the humans who lived in the area, thus clearing it of all, save the gods, other deities, and the Nagas. One day, while on pilgrimage to these parts, Sage Kashyap came upon the beautiful but uninhabited landscape. Realizing that human habitation was not possible until Jalodhbhava was removed, he prayed to Lord Brahma to vanquish him. As the gods amassed around the lake to kill the demon, Jalodhbhava disappeared into the lake and thwarted their sustained efforts. Ultimately, one of the gods pierced a hole in the surrounding mountain to allow the water to be drained, so that Jalodhbhava could be exposed and slain. The land that emerged as a result came to be called Kashmir, the verdant valley nestled amidst the mountain ranges, becoming home to humans and deities alike.

Thus goes the story, with multiple variations and continuations, of the origin of Kashmir, as told in its Sanskrit texts, Persian narratives, and Kashmiri oral traditions. These tropes about the origin of the land, and later its people, connect Kashmir's multilingual tradition of historical composition across the centuries, even as they give voice to the idea of Kashmir as a sacred space—a paradise on earth. The objective reality of Kashmir's geography as a valley lush with

meadows, surrounded by high and low mountain peaks, criss-crossed by rivers, and dotted with springs and lakes, was given subjective shape in the imaginings of its writers, storytellers, itinerant holy men, and ordinary men and women as they grappled with the spiritual and political task of recounting its—and their own—shared past.[1]

This book explores the long, vibrant, and textured historical tradition in Kashmir and the ways in which it narrated the idea of Kashmir in tandem with the ideas of history and history-writing. It follows the production, circulation, and consumption of these two ideas in a variety of narrative practices, such as *tazkira*s, *tarikh*s, stories, poetry, and plays, from the late sixteenth century to the present. In contemporary discourse, Kashmir is unthinkingly described as either an embattled territory or a tourist paradise, without any sense of the indigenous articulations of attachment to the land as place. These articulations have been, and continue to be, enacted through an interplay of multiple languages, genres, oral traditions, textual practices, and performances within what I refer to as the Kashmiri narrative public. This book thus historicizes both the idea of Kashmir as a paradise on earth and Kashmir as a political territory, by drawing attention to a wide range of definitions in between—such as place, community, polity, country, region, and nation that are associated with it—which were rendered coherent at different points in its historical tradition.

Successive chapters unravel the intertextual articulation of these ideas in Sanskrit, Persian, Kashmiri, and some Urdu narratives, through a discussion of the recurrent tropes of divine origin and settlement, as well as natural tropes evocative of a sacred landscape and geography. Descriptions of each feature of Kashmir's landscape, especially its water bodies, became arenas for the incessant rehearsal of its origins in mythical time, as well as a record of transformations in historical time as a result of human actions. 'Had Alexander the Great taken a drink from the waters of Kashmir's springs', remarked Birbal Kachru self-confidently in his nineteenth-century *Tarikh-i Kashmir*, 'he would surely have gained immortality'.[2] The book thus points out that place-making and evocations of landscape were critical aspects of historical practice,

and of organizing temporality and spatiality in Kashmir's narrative tradition.[3] History, in the textual and oral traditions, was enacted on local spaces that were nonetheless embedded within a much larger divine landscape, of which Kashmir was a microcosm. Temporality, likewise, could be specific and universal at once, as historical, mythical, and everyday time co-existed comfortably within particular narratives and the tradition as a whole.

At the same time, the chapters locate these ideas within particular political, institutional, and intellectual contexts, such as the Sufi shrine, Islamic universalism, Mughal statecraft, regional identities, nationalism, and everyday life, to name a few.[4] Not only did the narratives discussed in this book spatially define Kashmir as a spiritual and political entity, but they also created spaces within it for political and spiritual groups and a variety of ideological agendas depending on the context. By laying claim to defining the contours of Kashmir and its past, these historical narratives served as a critical means of negotiating the relationship between Kashmir and a variety of imperial entities, including the Mughals, Afghans, and Dogras. In the case of the Mughals in particular—who are firmly entrenched in the contemporary scholarly and popular imagination as the first imperialists in Kashmir—the narratives illustrate the multifaceted nature of the literary and political associations between the Mughal Empire and Kashmir that cannot be captured by outright denunciation or acceptance of the empire on the part of Kashmir's inhabitants.

This brings me to a rather simple point that bears repeating: the inhabitants of Kashmir were not merely passive victims or instruments in a series of imperial conquests. Rather, they were active, thinking participants who through the act of historical narration defined Kashmir's—and by the nineteenth century, their own—position within larger empires and their more immediate social contexts. Further, as their narratives gave voice to ideas of place, community, and identity, these ideas in turn influenced the nature of narrative practice itself.[5]

The book thus charts the interconnections and rifts within the tradition of historical composition in Kashmir over the *longue duree*,

as it highlights the features that have rendered it peculiarly 'Kashmiri'. It explores the importance of tradition—variously defined—and how it was related to the idea of history and historical practice in Kashmir. While historical facts were an important aspect of history-writing, individual authors defined their preoccupation with the task of narrating the past in terms of belonging to a shared tradition and community of knowledge that transcended time periods, genres, and languages. At the same time, they claimed the right to redefine the meaning of tradition and its practice according to their own social locations and political objectives. Just as Kashmir itself was a place defined by the imprint of successive waves of migrants, so too was history-writing defined by the impress of external and internal influences that combined to produce a stable, yet mutable, tradition of narrating the past. By the late nineteenth century, Kashmir and its historical tradition were synonymous.

As a whole, this monograph is an attempt to redefine Kashmir's historical tradition by including Persian narratives and Kashmiri oral traditions within its ambit. Scholarship on South Asian historical writing in general, and Kashmir in particular, has been preoccupied with its Sanskrit texts, such as Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and its continuations. This preoccupation has usually taken the form of sterile debates about whether these texts should be designated as objective historical texts or merely as poetry.[6] These texts, composed between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries,[7] are multi-textured narratives in *kavya* style that defined Kashmir as an auspicious landscape—a part of Shiva's consort Parvati herself—even as they narrated its political past. They drew on earlier Sanskrit narratives, such as the seventh-century *Nilamata Purana*, which had identified Kashmir as a paradise on earth. Within these texts, there were two kinds of paradise—a higher paradise above the earth, as well as a paradise on earth. Kashmir was the latter, since it was dotted with places, usually on the banks of rivers or springs or lotus ponds, 'that ontologically mediated between everyday life and the exalted state of existence experienced in a higher paradise'. These auspicious landscapes were thus referred to as crossings (*tirtha*), from where the devotee could cross over, or be liberated, into the higher paradise.[8]

The Sanskrit texts are not the primary focus of this book; I am concerned with them not in terms of whether or not they can be designated as 'history', but rather in terms of how the definition of Kashmir as an auspicious landscape within Sanskrit textual practice was appropriated by the later descriptions of Kashmir as a sacred space in the Persian historical tradition.[9] Equally significantly, the Sanskrit texts were designated as standing in for the tradition of historical narration in Kashmir, of which the Persian narratives saw themselves as continuations. Thus the Persian texts were not merely passive imitations of Sanskrit texts as described by orientalists and Indologists, but were rather actively engaged with them in claiming and redefining the tradition of historical composition in Kashmir.

The book thus demonstrates the deep-rooted interconnections among the twelfth- to fifteenth-century Sanskrit corpus, the sixteenth- to nineteenth-century Persian historical tradition, and the popular world of storytelling and performance in the Kashmiri language. While informing and drawing on each other, the three languages performed different functions in Kashmir in the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries: Sanskrit became the language of tradition, Persian the language of literary-narrative culture, and Kashmiri the language of intimacy and poetry. Usually studied independently of each other in South Asian historiography, the book illustrates the intellectual significance of exploring the interconnections between the two cosmopolitan linguistic traditions alongside their interactions with the regional vernaculars.[10] Significantly, thus, the book transcends the early Indian (Sanskrit), pre-colonial Mughal (Persian), and colonial-modern (vernacular languages and English) divides that usually inform works on regimes of history and historicity in South Asia, most of which focus exclusively on one of these periods and its associated language(s).

Finally, the book explores the politics of the past as manifested in contemporary Kashmir, where history is as much an embattled territory as Kashmir itself.[11] In the process, it provides a historically grounded reflection on the long-term reserves of narrative culture, practice, and historical memory that contemporary imaginings of

community and the nation draw on, even as they attempt to rethink them within Kashmiri political culture.

History, Religion, and Narrative Practice

This book is a contribution to the study of the nature and variety of historical knowledge and practice in South Asia, both before and after the advent of colonial modernity.[12] Rather than examining the historical narratives produced in Kashmir from the perspective of a particular definition of history, I allow them and their authors themselves to sketch out the meanings that they attributed to the past, their reasons for participating in the task of narrating the past, and their representation of the past as history. The book makes three broad points regarding historical thinking and practice in the past that have larger implications for the study of historiography: First, particular historical narratives have to be located not only within specific societies and communities, as Romila Thapar reminds us in her recent work,[13] but equally significantly, within much longer literary and narrative traditions of which they are an integral part. Second, historical practice and articulations of religiosity are intimately linked. And finally, historicity is defined not simply by an organization of time, but quite as much of space, and the interactions between the two.

The book thus illustrates that history was not simply a record of facts that took place in calendrical time, but more significantly, the tradition of writing about the past. A participation in this tradition allowed a variety of individuals to shape the past (and the tradition itself) according to the needs of the present, while remaining ensconced within a familiar idiom, even as they drew their legitimacy from it. The tradition of writing about the past incorporated heterogeneous temporalities and spatialities that not only brought together the past, present, and future into one seamless frame of discussion, but also allowed for mythical time and space to interact with historical time and territorially bounded spaces. Embedded within these narratives, and sometimes overtaking the overall linear and chronological recounting of the rule of kings, lay the narration of the activities of Sufi mystics and other divine and semi-divine

individuals who transformed Kashmir into a blessed landscape beyond historical time.[14]

Thus the narratives that were composed solely to celebrate the lives and deeds of these revered individuals, such as tazkiras, were nonetheless deeply imbued with a sense of the past, and were driven by political concerns. Moreover, even texts that have been considered more strictly historical in the pre-modern South Asian context, such as tarikhs, narrated the past explicitly to say something about the present, and at the same time could be driven by a theological principle that was located outside of historical time. Furthermore, in the context of Kashmir, as in other parts of South Asia, tazkiras of saints and tarikhs of kings drew liberally from each other, especially in terms of delineating the relationships between temporal and spiritual authority, with the former being presented as subservient to the latter in both forms of composition.[15] In addition, both used similar modes of authentication that drew on local and universal traditions. And finally, both constructed the past in a chronological manner in which the subjects of history—usually kings and saints—acted at particular historical moments, while at the same time presenting saints (and sometimes also kings) as trans-historical figures who existed beyond time and place.

The distinction between the two, I suggest, rests in the fact that tazkiras, while clearly presenting themselves as recounting the past, did so with the intention of creating an Islamic religious sensibility, rather than a tradition of historical writing. Tarikhs, on the other hand, while drawing on the religious tradition created in part by tazkiras, saw their main role as participating in the production of a past, as well as a tradition of writing about the past. Moreover, tazkiras were primarily interested in presenting Kashmir as a discursive Islamic space created and made habitable through the efforts of particular Sufi mystics and their followers, while tarikhs became a ground for the articulation and management of sectarian and religious differences in the present.

It is clear that in both types of texts, Kashmir was a sacred landscape, a palimpsest created by successive waves of migrants as they sought to control its at once charming and unforgiving natural environment, partly by accommodating to, while at the same

time reshaping the traditions of those who came before them. Both tazkiras and tarikhs intimately linked the genealogy of the land to the lineages of the saints and rulers acting upon its landscape, and ultimately, to the genealogy of its narrative tradition itself.

Even in the nineteenth century, with the incursion into Kashmir of the modern historical method and its ideas about the past, the Persian and Kashmiri textual and oral narratives continued to operate within the framework of the established tropes and ideas within Kashmir's long historical tradition. The book demonstrates how colonial knowledge production projects in this period brought Kashmir's Sanskrit historical tradition to the centre-stage once again, only to deracinate it from its local context and make it available for incorporation into the nationalist narrative of India's past. This aligned Kashmir's Sanskrit tradition with India's Hindu past, and Hinduism more broadly, while the Persian tradition was increasingly marginalized as a later import into Kashmir, much like Islam, with which it came to be associated. Although relegated to the sidelines, Persian literati carried on a robust engagement with modern ideas and methods of history, becoming more precise and factual in recounting the past, while at the same time reaffirming Kashmir as a sacred space and as the home of a community of Muslims.

On the other side, the orientalist knowledge production projects were focused primarily on the twelfth-century *Rajatarangini*, and advocated a very narrow view of history-writing that led them to designate the text as the lone beacon of history amidst a sea of ahistoricity in the Indian Subcontinent. Although they dismissed the Persian narratives that followed as ahistorical, blind replications, these projects were nonetheless deeply informed by Kashmir's multilingual and interconnected historical tradition. Some orientalist translations of Kalhana's text, for instance, sought a uniquely Kashmiri conception of the past in it.[16] Even in the case of nationalist projects that plucked *Rajatarangini* out of its regional context to claim it as an Indian national text, the definition of history and how it should be recorded was incessantly contested. These discussions coalesced around whether dry historical facts could truly encompass the history of the nation, the real essence of which could

only be found in literary works,[17] such as *Rajatarangini*, and how the past of the region was to be incorporated into the history of the nation. The book thus analyses the varied ideas of history that were circulated and debated in the Kashmiri narrative public and Indian public discourse, even at the moment of history's ascendency as a rationalist, positivist, and empirical discipline.

As a result, the monograph amply demonstrates that Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* was not the end of historical composition in Kashmir. The text itself continued to live and circulate in its multilingual translations, and in the stories drawn from it, long after its composition in the twelfth century. Equally significantly, it was followed by a rich textual tradition of historical narration in Persian that was deeply influenced by its definitions of origins, tradition, and place. Transformed and adapted within the Persian narratives, these ideas in turn found their way into orientalist and colonial discussions of Kashmir as a unique region with a distinct narrative tradition.

Cosmo-Vernacularity and the Kashmiri Narrative Public

The term vernacular has been used in various senses throughout the book; it is not merely used to designate a language that is native to a particular region (in this case Kashmiri in Kashmir). This is partly because of the peculiar linguistic ecology of Kashmir and its sliding scale of vernacularities, with Persian, Kashmiri, and to an extent Urdu in the later and more contemporary period, emerging as interconnected, yet unequal, vernaculars at different points of time.

The book argues for the vernacularity of Persian in the context of Kashmir's narrative tradition, since Persian narratives were critical to the articulation of a sense of Kashmir as a sacred space, an articulation that was deeply informed by the Sanskrit corpus, as well as by Kashmiri oral traditions. Furthermore, Kashmir's nineteenth-century Persian historical tradition continued to be vernacular because its authors embraced and modelled themselves on the modes and tropes employed by earlier narratives, albeit within a more factual framework of recounting the past. They did not, as was

the case with authors of modern historical narratives in other parts of India, seek to disparage the pre-modern tradition as unhistorical, and therefore, unworthy of emulation. This was partly because history did not emerge as a professional discipline in Kashmir until after independence, and thus, the opposition between academic and popular forms of historical narration did not manifest itself in ways that became apparent in colonial India in the nineteenth century.[18]

At the same time, however, Persian was a cosmopolitan language that brought Kashmir into the ambit of a much larger literary cosmopolis and more universal sacred geographies. Persian narratives adopted and adapted the regional myths outlined in the Sanskrit texts that drew Kashmir into wider subcontinental mythologies and the local myths of the Kashmiri tradition (such as the origin stories), to cast them in the universal idiom of Islam. Islamic universalism, thus, combined seamlessly with Sanskrit cosmopolitanism and Kashmiri localism to produce a clearly defined sense of Kashmir as place. Concepts of history and the modes of history-writing were likewise located at the intersection of classical ideas in the Sanskrit corpus, such as the perception of Kashmir's ruler as a universal monarch, the popular sense of the past as commonsense in Kashmiri oral traditions, and the Islamic notions of history and the present as part of a larger divine plan. The monograph thus explores the definitions of Kashmir and that of history as a product of a finely tuned balance between the cosmopolitan and the vernacular, as well as between the universal and the particular, terms that it illustrates should not be viewed as necessarily dichotomous.[19]

Another important reason why the Persian narratives discussed in this book are designated as vernacular is because they were not produced simply by courtly elites, but rather by a variety of individuals and in a range of institutional contexts that were not limited to the royal court. Sufi shrines were a significant location for the composition of narratives that framed Kashmir's spiritual and political past in tandem. Equally importantly, it was the space of the shrine and its patronage networks that allowed for the interfertilization between the cosmopolitan-vernacular Persian and the regional-vernacular Kashmiri, as well as between textual and

oral forms of narration. The shrine not only provided the space for the production of narratives, but also enabled their dissemination throughout a vast cross-section of society as Sufi shaykhs and *pir*s wandered the countryside reciting songs and stories in praise of the land and the spiritual stalwarts who had converted it into a paradise. Storytellers and other performers, who operated mainly in the Kashmiri language, also drew their legitimacy through an association with particular Sufi shrines and the networks of writers, scribes, wandering mendicants, and ordinary devotees patronized by them.

Kashmiri, the vernacular language, emerged distinctly both in its written and oral forms at the turn of the nineteenth century, with a small but significant print market in place by the late nineteenth century. Being the language of everyday discourse and familiarity, as well as a medium of protest against the state, Kashmiri formed a link between institutions and individuals that composed the past and those who disseminated and consumed it. Moreover, it allowed for the circular movement of knowledge, tropes, and ideas between textual and oral narratives, thus providing the foundation of the Kashmiri narrative public. The narrative public was a space where ideas about the past, place, and people were generated in multiple languages and genres by a range of individuals through a dialogue with each other, and were circulated to become an integral aspect of the commonplace narrative of the past and present in Kashmir. The book demonstrates that memories, historical facts, stories, and traditions were an equally important part of commemorating the past in Kashmir, and brings to light an array of colorful individuals who participated in this endeavour.

Thus the book provides a much more nuanced look at Sufism, Sufi institutions, and Islamization in Kashmir, than the widely accepted and well-worn scholarly descriptions of Kashmiri Islam, and religious identities in general, as syncretistic. Moreover, it demonstrates the embeddedness of these institutions and themes within larger political and literary contexts, even as they shaped these very contexts to advance particular interests. Equally significantly, the book contributes to a study of vernacularization and its complexities in the South Asian context. As is amply evident from

the case of Kashmir, vernacularization cannot be defined simply as a move from a cosmopolitan language limited to courtly elites to a vernacular language that is native to a particular region, because it involved a range of languages which interacted with each other on multiple levels to produce oral and written texts that performed a variety of functions. Rather than being either cosmopolitan or vernacular, these languages and the themes that they give voice to, are more aptly described as cosmo-vernacular, both universal and particular at once.

The Book's Sources

Kashmir's Contested Pasts is a product of several years of research in Kashmir, Jammu, and the United States. It is based on an examination of a variety of textual and oral sources in multiple languages—Persian, Urdu, Kashmiri, English, and Hindi. The main sources I analyse here are Persian textual narratives—tarikhs and tazkiras—composed from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, some in the original, and others in their Urdu, Kashmiri, and English translations.[20]

I also examine several Urdu historical narratives, as well as English, Hindi, and Kashmiri translations of the Sanskrit text *Rajatarangini*, mostly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although they are translations of an earlier text, I analyse their paratexts—introductions, prefaces, and notes—to argue that they should be read as new literary-historical narratives with their own concerns about writing and presenting Kashmir's past in a particular fashion.

Finally, I utilize textual and oral sources in Kashmiri, such as poetic tracts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and stories narrated to me by Kashmiri storytellers and other individuals. The construction of the oral sphere of the Kashmiri narrative public necessarily involved my participation in storytelling sessions and interviews with individuals who were, and continue to be, a part of this vibrant sphere. Not only did the storytellers, performers, and thespians share with me the content and history of their craft, but several other individuals shared their memories of performances,

readings, booksellers, and their impact on imaginings of Kashmir as place. Urdu and English historical publications, and newspaper and journal articles, some from web-magazines, form the basis of my analysis of the postcolonial and more recent discourses on history and identity in Kashmir.

These narrative sources are supplemented with archival records, such as Jammu and Kashmir government files and vernacular newspaper collections, primarily from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They provide an institutional context for the debates regarding the relationship between history, literature, region, and nation in Kashmir and colonial India.

Kashmir was prodigious in terms of the production of narratives of the past, and since this study covers an extensive temporal span, I have selected certain representative texts from each period to provide a greater depth of analysis. The selection was based largely on the importance of individual texts, evident from their recurrent mention in other texts, as well as the number of manuscript and printed copies of them available in libraries and in individual homes. The largest repository of Kashmir's Persian (and Sanskrit) manuscripts is the Research and Publications Department Library of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, which is located in Srinagar. As mentioned in Chapter 4, this department was formed in the early 1950s to preserve Kashmir's literary heritage and continues to house these manuscripts, some of which are well-preserved while others are in various stages of decline. A few descendants of pir families throughout the valley also maintain private libraries of manuscripts or printed copies of tazkiras and tarikhs, some of which I was kindly allowed to access. The Library of Congress and other assorted libraries in the United States house published copies of some Persian and Urdu narratives.

Although I have not used many pictorial sources in the book, the textual and oral idea of Kashmir as a paradise on earth—a landscape touched by the divine—acquired a visual resonance for me when I came upon the pictorial map of the Kashmir Valley painted on cloth that is stored at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. This map, dated c. 1836, and most likely commissioned by the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh, invokes the idea of

Kashmir as a blessed space through an intricate display of the sacred sites dotting its landscape. At the same time, it points to the larger territory which was coveted and claimed by the Sikh kingdom indicated by two arrows on opposite ends, one pointing towards Delhi as the other points towards Kabul.[21] The map, much like the narratives discussed in this book, thus brings together spiritual, political, and territorial geographies that were crucial to the imaginings of Kashmir as a sacred space and polity. It also illustrates the Valley-centred nature of these imaginings across pictorial, oral, and textual traditions.

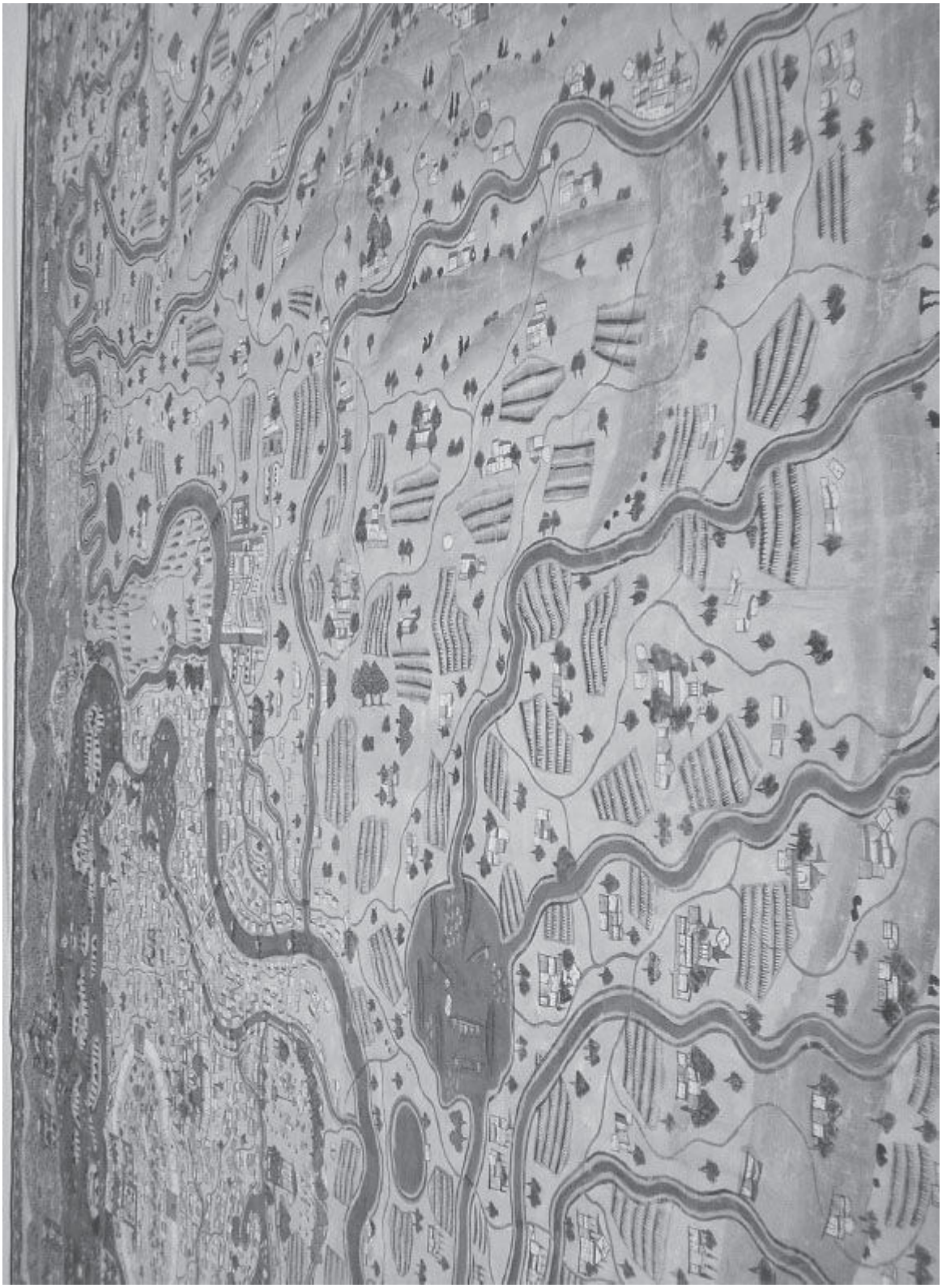

Figure I.1 *Map of Kashmir on Cloth, c. 1836*. Geography and Maps Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

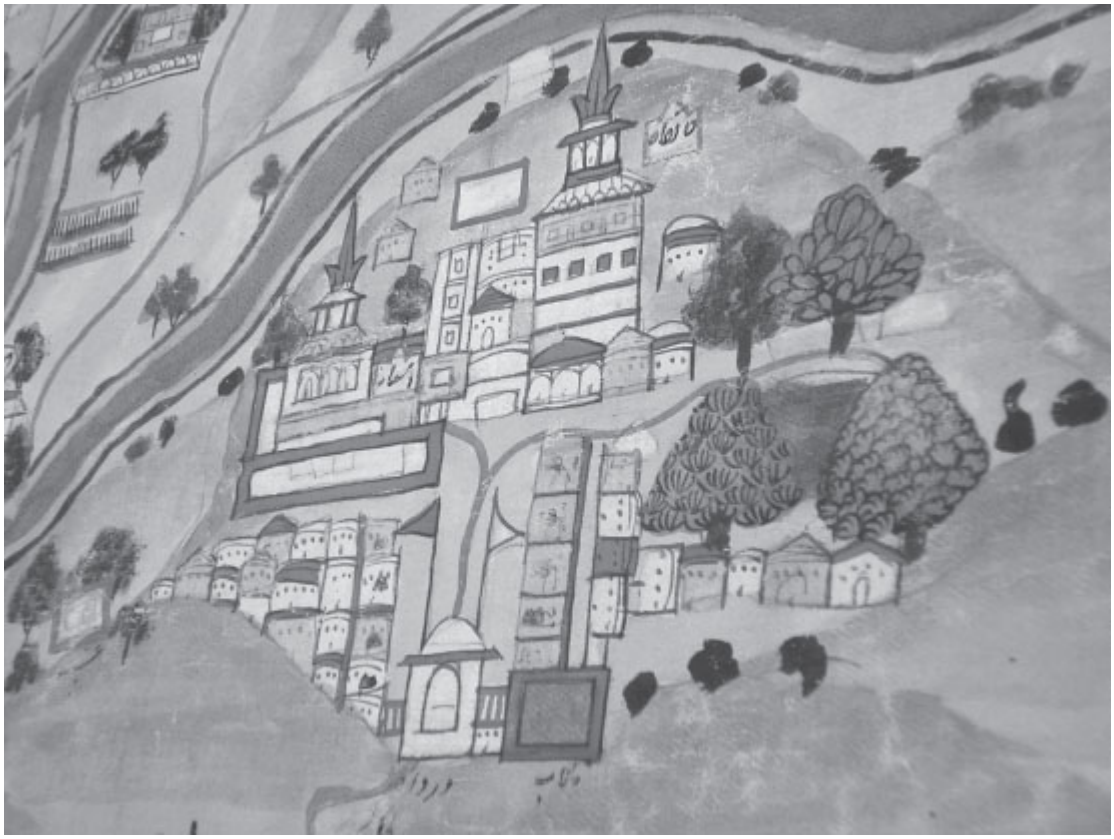

Figure I.2 Kashmir as a Sacred Landscape. *Map of Kashmir on Cloth, c. 1836*. Geography and Maps Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

As I have argued in Chapter 5, Kashmir was (and continues to be) a historically aware society. As I talked to a range of people about the past, it quickly became clear that not only were Kashmiris engaged with their history, but they also had a sense of the existence of a long tradition of historical composition in Kashmir. Not just scholars and historians, but ordinary men and women mentioned many of the texts analysed in this book, including *Rajatarangini*, *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, and *Tarikh-i Hassan*, even as they recounted stories about the land and its people that they had read or heard from these texts. These conversations provided the critical context for the circulation and dissemination of the textual sources explored in this book, even as they animated the characters and events that are narrated within them. This book is an attempt to share with its readers what I have learned over the course of nearly a decade about the making of this long and complex narrative

tradition, by highlighting its diverse engagements with a place, its past, and history.

Chapter Details

The first three chapters form the core of this monograph, as they elucidate the particular characteristics of Kashmir's historical tradition from the late sixteenth to the late nineteenth centuries. Chapter 1 examines late-sixteenth-century Persian tazkiras and tarikhs to argue that they were part of a shared narrative practice that made little distinction among facts, memories, and myths, and incorporated a variety of forms of spatiality and temporality within their narrative frameworks. Located at the intersection of the universal and the particular, they drew on earlier Sanskrit narratives, such as Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and the *Nilamata Purana*, to relocate regional myths of origin and settlement into a more universal Islamic imagination, as well as local sacred sites. Focused on the shaping of Kashmir's natural and political landscapes through the activities of Sufi divines, these narratives were critical to naturalizing Islam in Kashmir, thus rendering it into a sacred (Islamic) landscape. Written by individuals closely attached to particular Sufi shrines and orders, the narratives did not merely claim particular built or natural spaces within Kashmir for specific Sufi orders, but did so by asserting the power of the spiritual over the temporal authority. Even as they established Persian as the vernacular language of place-making and historical narration, these politically-driven narratives rendered a specifically Islamic religious sensibility a key feature of historical practice in Kashmir through the centuries.

The tarikhs written in the Mughal period in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which form the subject of Chapter 2, drew on these Sufi narratives, as much as the earlier Sanskrit corpus, to assert the distinctiveness of the space of Kashmir within the Mughal Empire. And by the late eighteenth century, as Kashmir transitioned from Mughal to Afghan rule, they gave voice to the category of people, not just the place, of Kashmir. While Mughal texts such as the *Ain-i Akbari* incorporated Kashmir into the Mughal landscape of

power through a reading of its Sanskrit texts, Kashmir's Persian narratives self-consciously engaged the Sanskrit corpus on questions regarding the style and purpose of narrating the past as both tradition and history, even as they redefined the meanings of both terms. By invoking a specific literary genealogy, these tarikhs constituted Kashmir not simply as a natural and spiritual paradise, but also as a literary paradise—a special place produced by the literary imagination, even as it fostered such an imagination.

Chapter 3 follows the continuation of these ideas into the nineteenth-century tradition of historical composition, which not only grappled with the new political context of Sikh and Dogra rule, but also the increasing orientalist attempts at mapping Kashmir's Sanskrit literary past. Interestingly, as these narratives (which continued to be composed in Persian), incorporated new idioms of facticity and historicity in recording the past, they also became more localized in defining Kashmir as a distinct mulk (region) in the global context through a deeper engagement with Kashmiri oral and textual traditions. An important element of the definition of this mulk were its people, who by the end of the nineteenth century were being conceived in explicitly political, even religious, terms. Eventually, this partitioned the narrative tradition itself into Hindu and Muslim narratives, which were aligned with Sanskrit and Persian respectively, even as the narratives increasingly used the trope of conquest to delineate the territory of Kashmir. Nonetheless, the narratives retained the picturesque qualities of the unique historicity of Kashmir—which they recognized as originating in the Sanskrit tradition—as they drew the contours around an indigenous archive of acceptable sources for a construction of Kashmir's past. The nineteenth-century Persian historical tradition, thus, remained highly vernacular.

Chapters 4 to 6 shift the focus to the colonial and postcolonial periods as they chart the continuities as well as the marked shifts in the world of Kashmiri historiography brought about by British orientalism, colonial knowledge production and its indigenous informants, and the advent of print culture. Chapter four in particular explores the massive impact of the Indological preoccupation with originary texts and singular notions of authorship—which it brought

to bear on editing and translating Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*—on Kashmir's narrative tradition. In effect, the orientalist project sundered the Sanskrit corpus from the Persian historical tradition, and by extension, its Kashmiri context, eventually incorporating it into India's literary past instead. Its contents, meanwhile, were utilized to narrate India's ancient (inevitably defined as its Hindu) past, thus creating a colonial archive of historical sources from Kashmir. Indian nationalists further appropriated these texts—as well as the region—into their own projects of narrating the past of the Indian nation. This new conversation on history marginalized the Persian tradition and literati, and brought a new set of interlocutors, the Kashmiri Pandits, to the fore of knowledge production. Nonetheless, these informants infused orientalist projects with tropes and ideas from the indigenous narrative tradition.

Chapter 5 demonstrates the complex makings of Kashmir's narrative tradition, and the world within which it was circulated and consumed. It explores the network of multiple individuals, genres, and languages that formed the interlinked world of the Kashmiri narrative public, which persisted in the face of orientalist intervention and the advent of princely rule in Kashmir. Indeed, one of the features of this public was that it operated in a sphere that was relatively free of state and colonial influences, drawing as it did, on a long reserve of memory and multilingual narrative practices that resonated with the idea of Kashmir as place. Textuality, orality, and performance came together in the productions of writers, storytellers, minstrels, and wandering actors to create a space where people could experience the past as a collective, mystical, and everyday experience. At the same time, the narrative public allowed for a dialogue between, and an accommodation of, multiple identities across the boundaries of class, religion, and sect. The chapter ends with a discussion of the narrative public in the postcolonial period through an analysis of a particular play, which calls for a return to peace and harmony in Kashmir through a revival of its flexible and open performance traditions.

The final chapter continues in this vein to reflect on the increasingly fractured nature of the narrative public in contemporary Kashmir. Indeed, it argues that the narrative public no longer exists

as a unified domain, since it is now split into multiple, mutually oppositional publics that are advocating particular versions of Kashmir's history, and ultimately, definitions of Kashmir itself. These versions write Kashmir's past as either purely Hindu or purely Islamic, thereby claiming it as the exclusive homeland for Hindus or Muslims. The Urdu and English press and publications market consistently attacks the people's ways of engaging with the past through stories in texts, oral traditions, and performances, and their definitions of Kashmir as land and place, rather than as a territory. Since these ways are labelled ahistorical based on the standards of disciplinary history and objective truth, I end with a plea for a more nuanced approach to history-writing in Kashmir, that draws on and learns from the richness of Kashmir's long and adaptable historical tradition.

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[1] As J. G. A. Pocock argues with reference to the idea of Europe, it is possible for a place to be a reality and a construction at the same time. See Pocock, 'Some Europes in Their History', in Pagden (2002), pp. 55–6. See also, Pagden, 'Introduction', in Pagden (2002), pp. 1–32; Pagden, 'Europe', in Pagden (2002), pp. 33–52. For the significance of myths—especially those linked to the land—in creating a shared sense of the past, see Hughes, 'Introduction', in Hughes and Trautmann (1995), pp. 1–20; Bender, 'Introduction', in Bender (1995), pp. 1–18. For myths as one of the central ways in which narratives of the past structure themselves, see Dirks (1982), pp. 655–83; Pollock (2007), pp. 364–81.

[2] Kachru (1846), pp. 17ff.

[3] For a study of landscape as a repository of memory and the past, as well as its role in shaping the concepts of space and time, see Stewart and Strathern, 'Introduction', in Stewart and Strathern (2003), pp. 1–15; see also Schama (1995). On how space is produced by literary cultures even as literary cultures are recreated in space, see Pollock, 'Introduction', in Pollock (2003), pp. 27–30.

[4] On the importance, particularly for historians, of interpreting narratives of the past in their historical contexts, see Guha (2009), pp. 269–88.

[5] In an analysis of historical narratives, for an insight on historicizing both genre and community, and how they influence each other, see Guha (2004), pp. 1084–1103.

[6] For instance, Slaje (2004); Basham, 'The Kashmir Chronicle', in Philips (1961), pp. 57–65. For exceptions, see the articles in the special issue of *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* devoted to the *Rajatarangini* tradition,

including Shulman (2013), pp. 127–30; Cox (2013), pp. 131–60; Obrock (2013), pp. 221–36. See also, Roy, 'The Making of a Mandala', in Pati, Sahu, and Venkatasubramanian (2003), pp. 52–66; Roy (1999), pp. 1–19; Roy (1994), pp. 3–18.

[7] The most widely read of these texts is Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (River of Kings), written in 1148–9, which contains nearly 8,000 verses. Its continuations include Jonaraja's *Rajatarangini* (c. 1459), Srivara's *Zainatarangini* (c. 1486), and Shuka's *Rajatarangini* (c. 1585).

[8] Inden, 'Kashmir as Paradise on Earth', in Rao (2008), p. 525.

[9] Diana Eck's recent work (2012) explores how the idea of India developed in its 'complex Hindu imagination' through its sacred sites and rituals of pilgrimage. It gives little insight, however, into the ways in which Islamicate geographies were overlaid on these imagined Hindu landscapes.

[10] Kumkum Chatterjee has argued for the need to study the linkages between Indic and Indo-Persian literary traditions to overcome the Hindu–Muslim divide that continues to plague South Asian intellectual and cultural history (2009b, pp. 12–16). In *Cultures of History*, she illustrates the influence of Persian traditions on Bengali/Sanskrit historiographical forms.

[11] On history and its uses in situations of political conflict and contexts of violence in South Asia, see essays in Udayakumar (2001).

[12] There is a large body of recent scholarship devoted to this subject, most recently, Thapar (2013).

[13] Ibid., pp. 53–4.

[14] For spatiality in Sufi practice and texts, see Green (2012). For the 'religious imaginary' and its role in defining temporality and history, see Murphy, 'Introductory Essay', in Murphy (2011a), pp. 1–11; Novetzke, 'The Theographic and the Historiographic', in Murphy (2011a), pp. 115–32. For the deep linkages between ideas of temporality and spatiality within religious discourse and practice, see Corrigan, 'Spatiality and Religion', in Warf and Arias (2009), pp. 157–72.

[15] On this point, see Green (2004b), p. 425.

[16] See Stein, 2 vols (1979) [1900].

[17] On these debates, see K. Chatterjee (2005), pp. 1454–75; Chaudhury, 'History in Poetry', in Aquil and Chatterjee (2008), pp. 391–417.

[18] For the opposition between vernacular and academic history, see P. Chatterjee, 'Introduction', in Aquil and Chatterjee (2008), pp. 1–24. See also P. Chatterjee (2003).

[19] For meanings of the terms ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘vernacular’, see Pollock (2000), pp. 591–625.

[20] All translations from the original Persian, Urdu, Kashmiri, and Hindi are mine, unless otherwise noted.

[21] *Map of Kashmir on Cloth, c. 1836*. The Sikhs ruled Kashmir from 1819 to 1846.

1

GARDEN OF SOLOMON

Landscape and Sacred Pasts in Kashmir's Sixteenth-Century Persian Narratives

In so far as the Persian narratives of sixteenth-century Kashmir have received any scholarly attention at all, it has been to dismiss them as merely imitative of the far more superior Sanskrit historical tradition—embodied by Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and its continuations—that preceded them. Walter Slaje, for instance, stated pointedly that there were '*no independent* Persian sources' on the history of Kashmir's transition to Islam in the period between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, since Persian narratives were 'digested' summaries of Sanskrit writings, and 'were in no way composed by contemporary eyewitnesses', thus rendering them unreliable. On the other hand, Kashmir's Sanskrit chronicles, according to Slaje, were rich and continuous, with their authors displaying a sense of history that resembled European ideas of history writing.[1] My intention in this chapter (and the ones following), is not to retrofit Kashmir's Persian narratives within a nineteenth-century rationalist, positivist view of history. Rather, it is to probe their internal temporal frames and modes of authentication to reveal a deep engagement with and dialogue between the past and present, and time and space, taking place within them. Further, this chapter seeks to highlight their subtle engagement with the Sanskrit tradition that was far more complex than mere imitation or translation.

The narratives discussed in this chapter were composed during an especially chaotic time in the history of Kashmir, and were both a dialogical response to the political situation, as well as interventions into contemporary discourse that specifically attempted to shape the divided present by presenting a unified vision of the past. They were written in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and include *tazkiras* or hagiographies of the Sufi saints of Kashmir. Irrespective of how they have been retrospectively labelled—either as authentic histories, digested summaries, or fanciful hagiographies—their narrative structure was framed by Kashmir's ongoing encounter with Islam through the activities of Sufi mystics on its landscape. Moreover, they attempted to establish the trajectory of the emergence and institution of Islamic rule in Kashmir—the Kashmiri Sultanate—in tandem with Kashmir's spiritual transition to Islam, to emphasize the relative strength of spiritual over temporal authority. Since they were themselves participants in Kashmir's conversion to Islam, these texts do, in fact, shed significant light on the subject as they narrate and memorialize the origins of the community of Muslims in Kashmir.

Thus the texts, written in the cosmopolitan language—Persian—established Kashmir as a unique landscape especially blessed by Sufi saints by linking its identity to a more universal, Islamic space. In this sense, I suggest that it may be worthwhile to read them—to borrow and combine Sheldon Pollock's terms—as an example of universalistic vernacularism.[2] While written in a cosmopolitan language and in genres that made them part of a much larger literary universe than Kashmir, these texts created a specifically Kashmiri narrative space that drew upon earlier indigenous (Sanskrit) narrative traditions while introducing new elements to it. Furthermore, they were narratives of place-making that laid claim to the landscape of Kashmir, even as they set about (re)defining it. A study of their narrative and methodological structures and concerns, thus, illustrates the peculiar linguistic ecology of Kashmir, in which one cosmopolitan language was replaced by another cosmopolitan language in an age of vernacularization to cast the vernacular in universal terms.

The four texts analysed here fall broadly within the categories of Sufi hagiographical texts called tazkiras and Indo-Persian chronicles called *tarikh*s, although, as I discuss below, this distinction itself is problematic. *Dastur-us Salikin* (Rules of Saints/Elders) is a treatise written in praise of the Suhrawardiya saint, Shaykh Hamza Makhdum, which was completed between 1554 and 1555. It is a compendium of the shaykh's sayings, as well as his biography by his successor, Baba Daud Khaki. Written in a mixture of verse and prose, the text ranges from describing Hamza's life, his education, his miracles, and his activities and qualities as leader of the Suhrawardiyas, to a discussion of his sayings in the light of the Quran and Hadith. *Taufat-ul Ahbab* (Gift for Friends) is a straightforward prose hagio-biography of a single Sufi divine of the Nurbakhshiya sect, Shaykh Shamsuddin Iraqi, written sometime in the early 1560s by Muhammad Ali Kashmiri, a disciple of the sect.

The third text, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, completed by Sayyid Ali in 1579, has been categorized as a tarikh, as its title implies, by most modern scholars of Kashmir. However, the text reads as a prose hagiography of the Kubrawiya saint, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, his disciples, and the indigenous Rishi sect of Kashmiri mystics. The final text, entitled *Baharistan-i Shahi* (Abode of the Spring of Kings), by an anonymous author, was begun in 1586 and completed in 1614. It is a more traditional prose political chronicle, frequently interspersed with verse, that details the political events of Kashmir's past since its origins.

Between Memory and History?

While scholarship has regarded Kashmir's Persian chronicles as at best passive translations of Sanskrit histories, the voluminous mystical literature produced in Kashmir has been deemed to have even lesser merit. In both cases, scholars have distilled 'facts' from 'myths' within these narratives to produce their own histories of Sufism and Islam in Kashmir or more general political histories of the region.[3] Writing about the hagiographical literature of Kashmir in his comprehensive study, *Sufism in Kashmir*, for instance, Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi warned that the biographers of the saints were

‘credulous believers … [who] revelled in describing fantastic legends and anecdotes about the Sufis. They were interested only in glorifying the achievements of their masters, and found ready material in spurious discourses and writings, ascribed to the great masters’.[4] Being seen as the repository of these ‘fantastic legends’, hagiography as a genre has thus been unable to escape what John Renard describes as the ‘tyranny of blind facticity’.[5]

The scholarship on Sufi hagiographical literature in the South and Central Asian contexts has long argued for a more context-sensitive reading of these texts. Writing of eleventh-century Persian Sufis, Omid Safi, for instance, argued that far from operating in a purely spiritual realm, Sufi mystics ‘were as much as anything men and women of power’.[6] What endowed Sufi saints with their power, of course, was their hagiographies, which are replete with stories of their supernatural feats and miracles, written in their praise by their disciples and descendants. As a result, these texts cannot be read and dismissed merely as ‘straightforward biographical history’; rather, they have to be understood as politically motivated narrations of stories regarding saints, usually as a means to define communities by connecting them to the saintly generation. In Safi’s words, ‘hagiographies connect the saint to his community, and the audience of the myth (in a textual or performative context)’.[7] John Renard similarly argues that the purpose of the varied tales recounted in Sufi hagiographies is not to test the listeners’ or readers’ credulity, but rather to connect local Islamic communities with a much larger community of believers.[8]

Thus, saints’ lives do not exist *a priori*. Hagiographies endlessly create and recreate them to serve specific political purposes, consequently ‘ensuring’, as Allan Roberts and Mary Nooter Roberts point out, ‘that they are forever perpetuated in a “sacred present” that is continually grafted onto the pure potentiality of a remembered past’. Roberts and Roberts therefore define hagiography as ‘an active process of identity formation located in the conceptual space somewhere between memory and history. That is, hagiography retains origins as diffuse as memory, yet it is as purposeful and politically driven as history’.[9] This definition, articulated in the

context of the visual hagiographies surrounding a modern Senegalese Sufi mystic, can as much apply to the tazkiras discussed here. In fact, memory and history, which are so often regarded as diametrically opposed, constituted each other, not just in pre-modern Kashmiri hagiographies, but quite as much in texts that have been categorized as more traditional histories (tarikhs) into the modern period.

The interpenetration of a variety of genres in the texts discussed in this chapter highlights the problem with these categories, especially the tendency to attribute authenticity to tarikhs, while tazkira*s* are labelled unreliable inventions that perform a singular, purely religious function. In his study of the Chisti hagiographical tradition, Carl Ernst warned early on against the polarity of these categories, stating that the relationship between them should be seen as more symbiotic.[10] He further pointed out, with reference to tazkiras, that 'the increasing overlap of religious and political objectives is one of the most fundamental themes of these texts'.[11] Nile Green makes a similar point with reference to Sufi hagiographical literature composed in eighteenth-century Aurangabad, which he argues was deeply connected to the textual traditions of kings (tarikhs) and embedded in the socio-political contexts of its composition.[12] More recently, Green has argued that Sufi hagiography was a genre that was 'most intrinsically tied to the spaces of Indo-Muslim history, for while hagiographies were notionally about saintly persons they were *ipso facto* about saintly spaces'. Moreover, through the stories of saints and their miracles that they recounted, these narratives tied together the literate (political) and non-literate sections of early modern Indian society.[13]

I would go further to suggest that the Sufi tazkiras under discussion here were not simply political and spatial, but also embodied a distinct historical consciousness, through the commemoration of a 'remembered past'.[14] A recent edited volume on hagiographical writings in South Asia examines a variety of sacred texts from the perspective of their engagement with temporality and the past. The editor, Anne Murphy, argues that 'understanding the religious as the production of tradition through

dynamic temporal interaction—an exchange between past, present, and future through which an experience of time itself is produced—allows us to recognize the key role of the representation of the past in the production of a religious sensibility'.[15] In the same volume, Christian Lee Novetzke challenges the idea that religious texts such as sacred biographies cannot contain a historical consciousness within them or that the theological and historical are mutually exclusive categories. He argues that these genres should be seen as 'a heuristic typology, not a rule of discourse', since most South Asian texts 'mix and match genres'.[16]

It is imperative to keep this in mind while examining sixteenth-century texts from Kashmir, which not only embodied the characteristics of several genres, but were an attempt to create a religio-political and spatial sensibility by bringing together the past, present, and future within one temporal frame. For all these texts, ethical and political concerns were deeply intertwined, and the act of recording Kashmir's Islamic past was seen to be morally transformative for both the authors and the readers/listeners.[17] As a result, the authors of tazkiras were as likely, if not more, as the authors of tarikhs to establish their legitimacy by giving a detailed account of their sources, both texts and auctours (informants),[18] thus locating the saint in question in historical space and time while at the same time transcending these categories. The hagiographers considered earlier hagiographies and court histories to be as important as the memories of eye-witnesses in establishing the credentials of the saints. Accordingly, the resultant texts, while containing stories of the miraculous and the supernatural, were anything but fanciful for their authors and readers/listeners. They were meant to structure the narratives to present a particular view of the past to serve specific political purposes in the present and future. Furthermore, texts that have been categorized as tarikhs were equally likely to emotionally engage their audiences by including events, especially when describing the lives of saints, which can hardly be considered factually accurate. Finally, both tazkiras and tarikhs depended on economic and political forces to sustain themselves, even as they attempted to shape these entities.

This is not an attempt to suspend the distinction between memory as a sensual and emotional experience—which is not tied to a specific, certifiable time—and history, as Novetzke points out, as 'marked by the logic of time and place, set in the language of proof and fact'.[19] It is to suggest instead that within the Kashmiri narrative universe, for the authors of the texts under discussion—and thus also the texts themselves, and their performers and audiences—these distinctions appeared to have been meaningless, both in terms of understanding and in practice. Analysing the texts based on these distinctions would thus undermine their internal narrative coherence. Furthermore, as Sumit Guha has argued, 'The historical approach to narratives of the past must historicize memory itself', since historical memory too is rooted in socio-political contexts and 'includes not merely what is remembered but—more crucially—what is forgotten'.[20]

It is therefore more fruitful to consider tazkiras, tarikhs, oral narratives, and performance genres as part of a larger Kashmiri narrative tradition that drew on a complex cultural repertoire formed through a dialogue amongst multiple genres. Within it, the past was recounted as a series of stories held together by familiar tropes, which were recast and reinterpreted in the context of the contemporary moment.

Texts and Contexts

I want to note at the outset that this section does not attempt to establish a single context that explains the content of the texts discussed here, since all texts are 'dialogical', in that they are in dialogue with texts written before them and become incorporated into texts that follow.[21] However, since these sorts of texts with particular concerns were first produced in Persian in a sizeable number in the latter half of the sixteenth century in Kashmir, it does call for some explanation. This helps to 'ground' these texts, as a genre, in the social history of sixteenth-century Kashmir.[22]

The Kashmiri Sultanate, founded by Shah Mir (Sultan Shamsuddin) in 1343, finally came to an end in c.1556. The long

process of its demise, beginning at the turn of the sixteenth century, was accompanied with, and then followed by, several decades of political chaos. This was characterized by the emergence of multiple centres of power under the direction of notable families—Chaks, Magareys, Chadurahs (Rainas), Dars, and Baihaqi Sayyids (from Khorasan)—which constantly shifted allegiances. Although Kashmir nominally transitioned to Chak rule in 1556, Chak control was neither complete nor final, and the royal court as centralized authority was in rapid decline in these decades. As a result, Kashmir's centre was weak and its frontiers were completely open to contestation. The frontier regions provided safe haven for recently deposed rulers or nobles, giving them time to regroup with the help of principalities in the neighbourhood of Kashmir, such as Kashghar, Jammu, and Jasrota, to name a few, before they reclaimed Kashmir's centre.[23]

As the central authority collapsed, Kashmir's political trajectory was determined by forces from within and without, sometimes working in consort. In 1540, for instance, on the invitation of three Kashmiri nobles—Kaji Chak, Abdal Magarey, and Regi Chak—Mirza Haider Dughlat (Babur's cousin and commander) invaded Kashmir, deposing the reigning Sultan, and ruling as Humayun's representative in Kashmir for ten years. Besides penning a historical narrative—*Tarikh-i Rashidi*—in which he devoted a portion to Kashmir, Dughlat also brought about major realignments in political and religious affairs by actively supporting the adherents of the Hanafi Sunni tradition in Kashmir, while persecuting other Islamic sects.[24] He targeted the Nurbakhshiya sect in particular, which drew its lineage from Muhammad Nurbakhsh (d. 1464), a messianic figure who through his saintly guide claimed spiritual descent from the Kubrawiya saint, Sayyid Ali Hamadani. After Nurbakhsh's death in 1464, the sect's influence waned in Central Asia, and its followers, foremost among them Shamsuddin Iraqi, sought new lands, such as Kashmir (and later Baltistan), to spread the sect's message.[25]

While the authority of the central court was in rapid decline, Sufi *khanqah*s (hospices) were flourishing as intra-Sufi competition for followers grew more intense in the uncertain political climate. Khanqahs had undergone increasing corporatization through the

course of the fifteenth century and controlled huge swaths of land and resources, alongside having mass followings. By the sixteenth century, they were major centres of political intrigues and their managers exercised influence far beyond the court,[26] as they played a critical role in disseminating new crafts and skills, and Islam, along with Persian language and literature in the region.[27] Inter-sectarian competition and a flurry of hagiographical production followed, particularly since in this period, the relationship between particular Sufi *tariqa*s (orders), their khanqahs, and the royal court, as well as other emergent centres of political power was not entirely clear.[28]

Thus the texts discussed here were produced at the intersection of the power nexus amongst these multiple spiritual and political entities. Not surprisingly, therefore, delineating the relationship among these entities and reiterating the ideal nature of kingship was of paramount importance to the narrative structure of the texts. The texts sought to define these relationships in the present by recording the histories of the construction and maintenance of hospices in the past, in the process connecting them to the spread of Islam and the establishment of the political authority of the Sultanate in Kashmir. Thus the texts actively intervened in political discourse by historically validating the claims of particular politico-religious groups over others to specific spaces, and hence also political power in Kashmir. For many of the texts, for instance, establishing the past relationship between Sayyid Ali Hamadani—presented as the originator of Islam in Kashmir—and particular Sufi orders, became a means to assert the legitimacy and influence of those Sufi orders in relation to rival Sufi groups in the present. At the same time, positioning Hamadani within the narrative of the emergence and establishment of the Sultanate allowed the texts to obtain leverage for particular Sufi sects, and associated nobles, over others within the court.

Many of the authors of the narratives discussed in this chapter were closely connected to, if not the managers of, particular khanqahs. They had received spiritual training under the masters of significant Sufi orders, both within and outside Kashmir, while also maintaining a close relationship to various centres of political power. The life of the author of *Dastur*, Daulat Bin Hasan, popularly known

as Baba Daud Khaki (1503–86), for instance, reveals the socio-economic location of the authors of the narratives. Born in Alauddinpura, Srinagar, Khaki earned his livelihood as a scribe while gaining a traditional education at institutions such as Madrasa Qutubuddinpura (set up by Sultan Zain ul-Abidin). Once his education was complete, he became the tutor for the children of the Chak royal family.

Eventually, however, Khaki was drawn to the Suhrawardiya Sufi order under the guidance of Shaykh Hamza Makhdum. Not only did Khaki perform austerities under the direction of his guide, he also travelled to Mecca and Multan, and spent some time at the tomb of Sayyid Jalaluddin Bukhari in 1557, where he met with and learned from prominent Sufis. Upon his return to Kashmir, Shaykh Hamza appointed him his *khalifa* (successor/vicegerent), and Khaki began to travel widely within Kashmir to enrol disciples into the Suhrawardiya order. After Shaykh Hamza's death in 1576, Khaki assumed the leadership of the order in the Valley and continued to draw disciples to its fold until his own death in 1586. There is some evidence to suggest that he may have left Kashmir towards the end of his life because he failed in his efforts to persuade the last Chak ruler, Yacub Shah, to temper his anti-Sunni policies.[29]

Besides *Dastur*, Khaki wrote a treatise, *Risala-i Ghusaliyah Yusuf Shahi*, a panegyric in praise of the Chak ruler, Yusuf Shah (r. 1578–9, 1580–6), and the land of Kashmir, in 1581. His other writings include *Qasida-i Lamiya*, a tazkira on the life, religious beliefs, and supernatural powers of Baba Hardi Rishi, a disciple of Shaykh Hamza; *Rishi Nama*, a commentary on the lives of the Rishis of Kashmir (indigenous mystical order); and *Risala-i Zaruriyah*, a treatise on matters of shariat and the fundamentals of Islam.[30]

The authors of the other two narratives discussed here similarly drew their patronage primarily from Sufi hospices, which in turn were linked to the patronage networks of noble families. The father of the author of *Taufat* was a prominent disciple of Shaykh Shamsuddin Iraqi, the leader of the Nurbakhshiya sect who came to Kashmir in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Iraqi had appointed him as one of his khalifas and had given over to him the management of a Nurbakhshiya khanqah in a place renamed

Islampur, along with its associated lands,[31] at least a portion of which our author most likely inherited. Likewise, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* was written by Sayyid Ali, whose mother was Sultan Nazuk Shah's (r. 1540–52) sister, and whose father was awarded the custodianship of Sayyid Ali Hamadani's khanqah at the end of the fifteenth century by Sultan Muhammad Shah.[32]

The prodigious writings of these individuals in Persian thus actively sought to bring together Kashmir's sacred and political pasts into a single narrative of Kashmir's transition to Islam through the efforts of particular Sufi mystics and their disciples. This power to define the past endowed them with the ability to exercise influence in the present. On a broader level, this had the effect of naturalizing Sufism—and by extension Islam—in the Kashmiri context by linking it to the very definition of its landscape.

The production of these writings, furthermore, has to be located in the context of the naturalization of Persian itself onto Kashmir's linguistic and cultural landscape, in which, as pointed out earlier, khanqahs and the literary productions of those associated with them (such as the texts discussed here) played a very significant role. These texts, I would suggest, lay at the juncture of the eve of Sanskrit cosmopolitanism and the dawn of Persian universalism within the Kashmiri narrative universe.[33] As early as the late fifteenth century, when Srivara, Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's court poet and author of *Zainatarangini*, discussed literary production amongst his contemporaries, he was referring to *desa* or regional literature, which for him meant writing in Persian, not Kashmiri.[34] By the late sixteenth century, although the composition of Sanskrit narratives continued, the use of Persian had become increasingly vernacularized in the Kashmiri context. Thus these narratives, while not in the regional vernacular—Kashmiri—embodied the characteristics of vernacular texts in that they actively sought to present a 'new aesthetic of Place',[35] that nonetheless drew on a more universal, Islamic imagination.

Moreover, their vernacularity is evident in the fact that since they were produced in Sufi hospices, and not in the court,[36] the texts enjoyed wide circulation within Kashmir among the literate and non-

literate alike—in courtly society, shrines, and the countryside, where wandering *pir*s and other religious figures disseminated stories told within them. As a result, they were both products and producers of literary-cultural and spatial identities through the narration of localized religious and political pasts that were at the same time located in a more cosmopolitan framework. These texts were not necessarily meant to circulate much beyond the confines of the region, even though they drew on trans-local literary networks and the fact that they were written in Persian ensured that their potential literary territoriality was far wider than Kashmir. Persian, thus, became a vernacular language in Kashmir, and was critical to defining the idea of Kashmir as an Islamic space.

In some ways, articulating a spatio-religious sensibility through referencing the past was not a novel endeavour in Kashmiri literary practice.[37] As Mahesh Sharma has argued, the Kashmiri Puranas were deeply interested in the past and they located Kashmir within new cosmographies by creating 'new genealogies, dynasties and histories'.[38] The Sanskrit court chronicles too had laid out a vernacular geography for Kashmir in great detail that had a deep influence on Persian writing in Kashmir. However, the Sanskrit texts circulated in a much larger cosmopolitan literary sphere than the Persian texts. Furthermore, the Persian narratives engaged specifically with the trope of origins, laying claim to describing and defining Kashmir, the place, by conflating its origins with the origins of the religion, Islam, within the place.

In this they were accommodating to the preexisting sacred geography of Kashmir, accepting its divine origins from water, while attributing the subsequent transformation of its ungoverned landscape into a cultivated domain directly to the actions of Sufi saints and their disciples. A related trope through which they rewrote the spiritual genealogy of Kashmir was travel, usually of Sufi saints and prophets between Kashmir and Central Asia, and within Kashmir itself.[39] This allowed them to literally recreate the contours of the place, as well as the spaces within, through the physical movement and actions of these figures. In this way, sixteenth-century tazkiras and tarikhs drew their historicity from being located at the intersection of multiple temporalities and spatialities.

To an extent, these texts resemble the *Mangalkavya* and *Ghazimangala* narratives from pre-modern Bengal, which celebrated the lives and exploits of Hindu deities or Muslim pirs and *ghazi*s respectively, in written as well as performative contexts. For instance, the *Mangalkavya*s were motivated by the need felt by the Brahmanical elite to draw the variety of folk traditions in the Bengali countryside into the Brahmanical fold.[40] Similarly, Kashmir's Persian texts were driven by a desire to present a vision of an Islamized landscape through an appropriation of earlier, pre-Islamic traditions into the fold of Islam. More importantly, Kumkum Chatterjee's description of *Mangalkavya*s in her recent work as, 'clear acts of remembrance in which the past was deliberately used to invoke some statements or points about the present',[41] can very well be applied to the narratives discussed here. However, I would go further to state that these texts were an *independent* and *intentional* means of chronicling Kashmir's sacred and secular past; they embodied the Kashmiri narrative universe's moment of transition from Sanskrit to Persian cosmopolitanism, which was nonetheless characterized by elements of the vernacular.

Localizing the Universal and Universalizing the Local

The central concern that shaped the narrative structure of these texts, as well as their claims to historicity, was a discussion of the advent and spread of Islam in Kashmir in tandem with the establishment of the Kashmiri Sultanate. In this, the texts sought to present Islam as a natural part of Kashmir's landscape by meticulously drawing out the relationship between the two. At the same time, their immediate concern was to gain adherents and land for particular Sufi orders by presenting concrete evidence for their right to build new shrines or occupy and control certain pre-existent ones, which in turn were linked to specific rulers and/or political figures through patronage networks. Drawing on both indigenous and Persian literary traditions to fulfil these objectives, these texts

became critical to drawing the contours of Kashmir as a sacred, Islamic space, both unique and universal at once.[42]

The modes of authentication put forward by these texts thus lay at the intersection of the specific/local and the universal. In *Dastur-us Salikin* (1554–5), the tazkira dedicated to his guide and Sufi master, Shaykh Hamza, Baba Daud Khaki clearly states that the text was composed after he had had the opportunity to be in the service of his *murshid* (spiritual guide) for several years, during which time he read over two hundred tazkiras and other writings of famous Sufi saints. These included *Khulasat-ul Manaquib* (Nooruddin Jafar Badakhshi's tazkira of Sayyid Ali Hamadani), *Masnavi Maulana Rum*, *Tazkirat-ul Awliya*, and *Malfuzat-i Shaykh Allauddin Simnani*. A perusal of these and other treatises, in some of which he found mention of Hamza's spiritual capabilities, inspired Khaki to pen the present text in order to highlight the abilities of his own guide and prove that he was no less a spiritual stalwart than any of the personalities Khaki had read about.[43]

However, that the information discussed in the text was collected from the classics of Persian mystical literature was not enough to legitimize the text. What authenticated the text was the fact that the undertaking was blessed by Shaykh Hamza, and Khaki had either been an eye-witness to the events he recorded or had received the information from reliable sources, and in many cases, from Shaykh Hamza himself: 'This book has been written during the time of and under the watchful eye of Shaykh Hamza, and therefore, no individual can cast doubt on its honesty and veracity.'[44] The intimate association with the shaykh also validated the text to issue moral judgements about the present in the light of the past. The saint, his khanqah, and the text that gave voice to both, thus became entwined.[45]

Similarly, Muhammad Ali Kashmiri, the author of the hagio-biography of the Nurbakhshiya saint Shamsuddin Iraqi,[46] entitled *Taufat-ul Ahbab* (1560s), notes at the outset of the text that when he was a boy, he had been inducted into the order by Iraqi himself.[47] This was clearly meant to lend the text an aura of authenticity, since the author had been touched directly by the saint whose life and

times he sought to recount. According to Kashmiri, he was approached by elders of the community and his friends with requests to write about Iraqi's life because he had been a close witness to the shaykh's behaviour and actions, through his own father (who was a close disciple of the saint). So he writes that, despite being sick, and despite being unable to undertake the task, he performed it as his moral duty and as an act of religious devotion.[48]

He further states that he utilized a variety of texts, including poetry, as well as eye witness accounts, from which he gathered information and insights that he put together in the form of a bouquet to present to his friends (and hence the title of his work—Gift for Friends).[49] It is notable that through the text, Kashmiri makes it a point of attributing the incidents he describes to particular texts, the authors and titles of which he usually notes, and/or to specific, named eye witnesses to the event. The texts mentioned frequently through the text include works by Muhammad Nurbakhsh, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, Hafiz Shirazi, Amir Khusrau, and Maulana Rumi, while the eye witnesses whose words are most often recounted include Iraqi's foremost disciples, such as the author's father (Maulana Jamaluddin Khaliullah), Baba Ali Najat, and Khwaja Ismail Qari.

Not only did the texts derive authenticity from their location at the intersection of the universal and the particular, but they also legitimized the saints in question by linking them simultaneously to indigenous and universal mythologies. *Dastur*, for instance, presents Shaykh Hamza's lineage and spiritual genealogy in detail, pointing out that he had descended from the Chandrabansi Rajput clan of the Rainas of Kashmir, and his immediate family had close relations with the court (since his mother was the Sultan's sister).[50] From his childhood, however, according to *Dastur*, Hamza's mind was turned towards spiritual attainments, and he had several encounters with Khwaja Khizr (the mysterious prophet who guides famous figures down the Sufi path)[51] and the prophets Musa (Moses) and Issa (Jesus). In fact, Khaki compares Hamza throughout the text to the prophet Issa, since Shaykh Hamza was celibate, could heal the sick, and return sight to the blind much like Jesus.[52]

The stories about Hamza's miracles as related in the text, however, were far more than simply about glorifying him as akin to figures from Islamic mythology. Instead, they were tied to the central narrative concern of these texts, which was to claim Kashmir's landscape for Islam, in this particular case as embodied in the figure of Shaykh Hamza. For Khaki, Hamza's holiness and his spiritual activities did not bring merit simply to himself and his followers, but rather transformed the land of Kashmir itself into a blessed landscape. In describing the land of Kashmir as sacred, Khaki was drawing on a long indigenous tradition, outlined in Sanskrit texts such as the *Nilamata Purana* and Kalhana's *Rajatarangini.* These texts described the origin of the land from a body of water through divine intervention by the gods Brahma and Vishnu, with the emergent land being adorned by goddesses in the shape of rivers and pilgrimage sites scattered across its landscape.[53] *Dastur* certainly does not refer to this origin legend; however, it is replete with images of the water and water bodies of Kashmir, their resident beings, and the land around them, being brought within the fold of Islam through Shaykh Hamza's efforts.[54]

In writing about Hamza's deeds, Khaki thus attempted to rewrite the land's past by bringing it into existence through the more recent intervention by Shaykh Hamza, even as the text rehearsed the themes found in the indigenous Sanskrit textual and Kashmiri oral traditions, particularly in their emphasis on water bodies and riparian landscapes. The sanctity of water, and the assertion of sacred and political control over Kashmir through its rivers and other water bodies, so essential to the seventh-century *Nilamata Purana* and later Sanskrit texts,[55] was appropriated in *Dastur* as an Islamic tradition introduced to Kashmir through Hamza's efforts. *Dastur* noted that Shaykh Hamza laid much emphasis on the importance of water in cleansing the mind and body, which was essential for attainting spiritual merit. Hamza would sit beside streams, springs, and rivers to meditate, where he often laid the foundation of a mosque or a *suffa* (raised platform) to offer prayers for his followers. He declared that to watch water was a form of devotion and meditation. *Dastur* records an incident in which, while travelling through the Valley, Hamza hit the ground with a stick, which led to

the sprouting of a spring at the spot where his stick had touched the earth. He built a suffa at this place and meditated there for two months; during this time, the people of the area became ‘good and honest’ (by which is meant that they converted to Islam). One of his disciples, writes Khaki, saw Khwaja Khizr at this spot.[56]

The frequent appearance of Khwaja Khizr in this and the other texts is significant in understanding the larger goals behind their composition. Khizr has been variously described as the spiritual guide of Sufi mystics, the patron saint of sea-farers, the lord of all waters, and is generally acknowledged in popular Islamic traditions ‘to be the companion of Moses who holds the secret to eternal life, as well as the one who guided Alexander on his quest for the fountain of youth’.[57] Khizr, a non-corporeal being who cannot be tied to a specific region, has been linked to almost all great Sufi figures by their hagiographers, particularly in his role as a spiritual guide to greatness. In the case of *Dastur*, he performed his traditional function as spiritual guide by appearing to Hamza when he was a child, but he also served a more practical purpose by appearing around water bodies to validate the activities of Hamza and his disciples as they took control over them and their resident beings. Thus Khizr embodied the trope of travel and migration so central to hagiographical texts in Kashmir (as also the Indo-Muslim hagiographical tradition more generally), by drawing attention to the wandering Sufi mystic as the creator of Kashmir as sacred landscape, which doubled as an allegorical space of the mystical journey itself.

A story narrated in *Dastur* is worth noting here in some detail. Once, writes Khaki, he heard voices emanating from Shaykh Hamza’s room. He knocked, and on getting no response, he walked into the room, where he found Shaykh Hamza deeply immersed in conversation with several beautiful beings with illuminated countenances. These beings immediately disappeared, and Shaykh Hamza admonished Khaki for disturbing them. He was then told that the beings were souls of the *chashma*s (springs) of Kashmir who had come to Hamza to gain *faiz* (spiritual knowledge). If Khaki continued on his spiritual path, he too would be able to converse with these beings and learn the secrets of the supernatural world

from them. After this incident, Khaki meditated on the banks of several springs and eventually he could also talk to and mould their souls. In this, writes Khaki, he was aided by Khwaja Khizr, who accompanied him on his travels through Kashmir as he attempted to bring the springs and the beings around and within these water bodies under the umbrella of Islam so that Shaykh Hamza's disciples could pray on their banks unhindered. As Khaki approached the spring at Kausernag, he was assailed by a spirit that arose from the water, but Khaki was able to enclose him in a pot and walk into the water. As he went in, a group of people emerged from the water and asked for *bayyat* (initiation) into Shaykh Hamza's order. As he came out, an enormous serpent arose from the water and after bowing his head three times to Khaki, accepted bayyat from him and vanished.[58]

Khaki, interestingly, is the main character in this story, although his spiritual power draws on Shaykh Hamza in his capacity as his foremost disciple. But the significance of the story lies in the fact that it claims the very souls of the springs of Kashmir for Islam. And it does so by appropriating the characters from the stories about their past, such as the *Naga*s (snake deities) that resided within the springs—hitherto associated in Kashmir's popular and textual traditions with Hindu mythologies—who were now associated with Islam through the universal characters of Sufi mystical traditions, such as Khwaja Khizr. Kashmir's landscape, thus, was redrawn as an Islamic space, through an intervention on its landscape by Sufi mystics and their disciples.

This intervention was cast not merely in spiritual terms, however, as Kashmir's transition to an Islamic space was defined by an assertion of Sufi control over Kashmir's often hostile landscape marked by impassable mountains, deep, gushing streams and rivers, and thick forests. This allowed for the reclamation of the land and its transformation into a settled, agrarian realm (almost always described as a garden), governed by a faithful, Islamic ruler. For this purpose, the texts indigenized universal sacred mythologies to serve specific political aims. This is apparent in another text written by Khaki, in which Kashmir is described as Bagh-i Sulaiman, or Garden of Solomon, an appellation that was often applied to Kashmir in later

Persian histories. Khaki composed this panegyric to Sultan Yusuf Shah Chak, *Risala-i Ghusaliyah Yusuf Shahi* (treatise on ablution), in 1581, with the express purpose of reminding Yusuf Shah of the correct Islamic path and tying it to the very identity of the land that he ruled.[59] This was significant because Yusuf Shah belonged to the Nurbakhshiya sect (and may even have converted to Twelver Shiism) and Khaki's text was an attempt to reintroduce him to (Sunni) Islam, with the ultimate aim of tempering his harsh imperial policies towards Sunnis.

Significantly, a large part of the text is devoted to the praises of Kashmir, the land, which is presented as uniquely endowed by the divine for the profession of the correct faith (Islam). This is again achieved through an emphasis on water and its purifying qualities, an element presented by Khaki as essential for spiritual success. The text suggests that since God had bestowed Kashmir with an abundance of pure and sweet water in the form of its many springs, canals, rivers, and lakes, these rites of ablution associated with the correct profession of the faith could be easily performed in this land. The text then lists Kashmir's miraculous and awe-inspiring springs, while describing the special qualities associated with each,[60] not unlike the earlier *Nilamata Purana*, which lists and describes over five hundred springs.[61] These and its other water bodies, thus, allowed the land to be transformed into a cultivated space by the Prophet Solomon himself, who was drawn to the landscape's many charms:

> The land of Kashmir is blessed like the land of Syria,
> Fruit trees and those that give shade, wonderful streams, and beautiful mountains can be found here.
> This land was settled by the Prophet Solomon,
> His *jinns* made it into a fertile, blooming garden.
> The friends of Allah and their devotees as well as supernatural beings make their abode here,
> This land serves as an example of an unparalleled land, the *watan* of *jinn*s and angels who inhabit it.[62]

And the political reins of this garden could only be in the hands of a ruler as sagacious and just as the Prophet Solomon.

Texts such as *Dastur* and *Risala-i Ghusaliyah*, thus, performed the task of renewing the existent oral and textual traditions about Kashmir's origins by bringing Islam in touch with the Kashmiri landscape. By taking credit for the transformation of the landscape, moreover, they became a means to negotiate the relationship among competing sectarian and political groups in a divided Kashmir.

Consolidating and Claiming Islamic Space

Within these texts, the naturalization of Islam on Kashmir's landscape was taking place in conjunction with the promotion of particular Sufi orders as the purveyors of the true faith, and their concomitant claims to land within Kashmir.[63] Again, however, these local claims were couched in far wider, more global, sacred frameworks. Thus, *Taufat-ul Ahbab* bombastically described and lionized Shaykh Shamsuddin Iraqi's activities in Kashmir to reposition the Nurbakhshiya sect in relation to other Sufi sects, as well as centres of political power:

> The Cause of Causes (God Almighty) had ordained that in the "proposed world" (*'alam-e-ijab*) the auspicious steps of Amir Shamsu'd-Din Muhammad would bring … true guidance to the people steeped in ignorance and those who had gone astray from the right path. The dazzling rays of this sun (*Shams*) of true guidance would kindle the candles of truthful direction to remove the darkness of *kufr* (infidelity) and aberration.[64]

Kashmiri presented the Nurbakhshiya sect as synonymous with Islam, and it was Islam, first brought to Kashmir by Sayyid Ali Hamadani, that needed to be reintroduced to Kashmir, a task that was undertaken with great success by Iraqi. Since the text treats Iraqi's undertaking in Kashmir as an expansion of the Nurbakhshiya mission in Central Asia, Kashmir's sacred past and present became an extension of Islamic lands in Central Asia and Iran. Indeed, Kashmiri cast Kashmir's recent political history too in terms of this larger Islamic mission, thus redrawing Kashmir's contours by re-centring it within a much broader Islamic space.

The text performs these functions through a discussion of Iraqi's activities in Kashmir, both during his first visit as ambassador of the Sultan of Herat, Husayn Mirza, between 1484 and 1491, and during his second visit as Nurbakhshiya missionary between 1503 and 1526. Travel thus emerges as a critical trope within this tazkira, as it draws Kashmir into larger spiritual and political networks. For instance, Kashmiri notes that during Iraqi's travels towards Kashmir the second time, as missionary, Khwaja Khizr appeared to him to bless his forthcoming undertaking in Kashmir.[65]

At the very outset of Iraqi's meeting with the Sultan of Kashmir, Hassan Shah (r. 1472–84), Kashmiri presents the latter (and his nobles) as lacking knowledge of proper courtly etiquette, implying that the courts of Herat and Khorasan were the centre of culture and civilization, while Kashmir was a mere outpost whose rulers did not know how to behave with a royal emissary.[66] In an interesting instance of rewriting Kashmir's history, *Taufat* attributes this lack of manners among Kashmir's royalty to the fact that Kashmir's rulers had not fought wars with rulers of other lands, and prior to Iraqi's visit, they had not entertained royal emissaries to their court. The text thus covers Iraqi's first stay in Kashmir through the description of a number of incidents in which he imparted lessons in protocol towards an ambassador and royal guest to the Sultan and his nobles, while also gradually revealing himself as a great Sufi master.

Kashmir's isolation (clearly from the wider world of Islam), according to *Taufat*, had resulted in the emergence of far more egregious problems in Kashmiri society than simply a lack of etiquette, since 'this land had totally forgotten all the tenets of faith and Islam and the laws of the *sharia* of the Holy Prophet'.[67] Having thus set Kashmir up as a place that had to be reunited with a much larger space of culture, civilization, and most importantly, the true faith, *Taufat* proceeds to draw a link between the activities of the Nurbakhshiya sect in Kashmir, as embodied by Iraqi, and the Kubrawiya shaykh, Sayyid Ali Hamadani's activities a century earlier in Kashmir.

The potential sectarian implications of this move were significant, since Sayyid Ali Hamadani was a prominent mystic from Central

Asia belonging to the Kubrawiya sect, the line (Kubrawi-Hamadani) that the Nurbakhshiya claimed spiritual descent from. This point was especially noteworthy in the case of Kashmir at this time, when Sayyid Ali Hamadani (along with his disciples, including Khuttalani, Shaykh Nurbakhshiya's preceptor), in part through these texts themselves, was emerging as the central character in the narrative of Kashmir's transition to Islam, and the establishment of the Kashmiri Sultanate. He was being credited with having introduced the true faith to the Sultans of Kashmir, who had been only nominally Muslim until that point, thus bringing about mass conversions to the religion. In this way, Kashmiri engaged in a double move by harnessing Kashmir's history of Islamic conversion to the conditions of Kashmir's present moment, when the backsliding royals, masses, and religious figures needed to be re-educated about the principles of their faith. Both the introduction of Islam to the land as well as the re-education of its people were carried out by Central Asian divines of the same sect, thus also emphasizing the legitimacy of the Nurbakhshiya Sufi order as a whole, especially in the Kashmiri context.

One of the ways in which *Taufat* engaged in this double move was by comparing Shamsuddin Iraqi's actions and responses in Kashmir to those of Sayyid Ali Hamadani. Not surprisingly, the text launches into a description of Hamadani's life and spiritual peregrinations at the beginning of its discussion of Iraqi's first visit to Kashmir, thus establishing an early link between the two individuals in the minds of its readers and listeners. The text goes on to suggest that Iraqi's harassment by Kashmiri mullahs—on account of his being the bearer of the true faith—was similar to the persecution faced by Hamadani at the hands of the ulema and theologians in Central Asia, who went so far as to attempt to poison him.[68] Both cases, of course, were meant to be reminiscent of the Prophet Muhammad himself and the battles he valiantly fought to bring forth the message of Islam. The text highlights Iraqi's battles with local Kashmiri religious figures in great detail, in particular with an individual named Shaykh Shihabuddin, who had reportedly come to Kashmir via Hindustan. In Kashmir, he incessantly placed hurdles in Iraqi's path in an attempt to sabotage his efforts to cleanse the

degeneration of Kashmiri society by questioning Iraqi's spiritual abilities and his grasp of theological knowledge. In each incident in which the two clashed, the text illustrates Iraqi's easy victory over his opponent through his greater spiritual abilities, while revealing his rival to be a mere scholar with little spiritual aptitude.[69]

Shihabuddin's depravity is highlighted in the text through a description of his daughter's wedding ceremonies with the son of Kashmir's *Qazi*, told in Iraqi's own words. According to Iraqi (as quoted in *Taufat*), the marriage was carried out in complete contravention of Islamic law and propriety, as those present 'performed strange acts, gestures, and rituals of infidelity for two hours'. Women and men intermingled freely and 'corrupt men, dirty youth and vagabonds of the city cast covetous glances on these women', without any shame or fear of God or his Prophet.[70] Kashmiri (through Iraqi) uses the wedding as a pretext to condemn the religious elites of the city of Srinagar, blaming their regression on the women in their households:

> But, observance of these practices is not restricted to the house of the *Qadi* and the *Shaykh-ul-Islam*. Such atheistic and idolatrous practices continue to be observed in the house of all scholars, theologians, and leading personalities of this land.… The family members of the elders and leading persons of this land, especially their womenfolk, do not do anything without the permission of astrologers.… This is why all scholars and men of learning in this land, high or low, nurse deep enmity and opposition to the people who believe in prayers and penance, purity and cleanliness.[71]

Iraqi's diatribe against the learned men of Kashmir, as quoted in *Taufat*, presented the project of reclaiming Kashmir's landscape for Islam as one that would have to be carried out on an individual, household basis.

Another important means through which *Taufat* reclaimed both the history of Islam in Kashmir, as well as the landscape itself for Islam—while asserting the authority of the Nurbakhshiya sect in the region—was by claiming specific physical sites as the legitimate property of the sect. A large portion of the text is thus devoted to describing the attempts made by Iraqi to gain control over the management of Hamadani's khanqah. The description of the

struggle for the control of the Khanqah-i Hamadaniyah is a reflection of, and direct intervention into, the larger political context within which the battles among Iraqi, the Kashmiri ulema, and rival Sufi sects were taking place. The late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when Iraqi was operating in Kashmir, and the mid-sixteenth century, when *Taufat* was composed, were fraught with political divisions played out on the site of Sufi sects, prominent religious figures, and their khanqahs. As the throne of Kashmir changed hands several times between Sultans Muhammad and Fath Shah in the period between 1484 and 1528, with high-ranking nobles in actual control of the administration, it is no surprise that the nobles allied with prominent Sufi shaykhs who enhanced their legitimacy and authority. Hamadani's khanqah, with its emergent symbolic power over the city, its inhabitants, and the region's sacred past, became the centre of these disputes as its management changed hands between Sufi sects depending on which Kashmiri noble family was in charge of political affairs.

By presenting these political divisions as the larger battle between true Islam and infidelity, with Iraqi representing the former, while all his opponents were clubbed together as either infidels or apostates, *Taufat* laid claim to the management of Hamadani's shrine as well as the political clout associated with it. Shaykh Shihabuddin, Iraqi's nemesis, who was appointed manager of the Hamadaniyah khanqah, is presented in the text as being a corrupt administrator, who more egregiously, attempted to do away with the customs in place in the hospice from Hamadani's time. This included the recitation of psalms called *Awrad-i fathiyyah*, which had been carried forward by generations of followers of that line (*Silsila-i Hamadaniyah*).[72] On hearing about Shaykh Shihabuddin's attempts to 'efface from the lands of Kashmir all traces, systems and the line of the Hamadaniyyeh order',[73] Iraqi set about regaining control of the hospice so that he could 'raise high the banner of Islam … and eradicate all symptoms of infidelity and ignorance … from the misguided people of this land'.[74]

A large portion of *Taufat* is devoted to Iraqi's activities in Kashmir to cleanse it of what the author regards as ignorance, sin, heresy, and blasphemy through the transformation of its physical landscape,

thereby reasserting the ability of Sufi mystics to exercise control over and shape the land. Much like Khaki's *Dastur*, it describes the actual changes wrought over Kashmir's landscape through Iraqi's actions, which simultaneously purified its water bodies and purged the land of the curse of infidelity. In the process, the land was improved into a blooming, fertile garden adorned with fruit trees, melon patches, and grape vines. As Iraqi goes through the text razing dozens of temples, which were then replaced by mosques, the text emphasizes how he altered not just Kashmir's built landscape, but quite as much its natural landscape, which was tamed and made more governable by his actions. This was done, for instance, by felling trees (in which pre-Islamic deities resided) and planting fruit trees brought from Central Asia in their place, to serve more practical purposes. In more than one instance, Iraqi appears as a gardener in the text, literally tending melon patches in the lands acquired by the new mosques that seem to be built with great rapidity by Iraqi's followers.[75]

His followers, interestingly, are described as jinns associated with the sacred sites of Kashmir, who accepted initiation into Islam at the hands of Iraqi and his disciples. Reminiscent of the jinns who helped Prophet Solomon transform Kashmir as a habitable home for Islam and convert it into a blooming garden (as described in Khaki's writings), these jinns took on a similar role for Iraqi in *Taufat* by razing temples, felling trees, and constructing mosques and flourishing gardens in their place. The text thus alludes to Iraqi's prophetic role in bringing about the rebirth of the land of Kashmir through the transformation of its wild forests into tamed gardens. Michel Foucault has described the garden as a space of 'very deep and seemingly superimposed meanings', that embodied 'the smallest parcel of the world and then …the totality of the world'.[76] The presentation of Kashmir as a garden sowed by Sufi mystics transformed (and improved) it into a distinct space that lay at the centre of a far larger and more universal sacred space. A few couplets from a *masnavi* (narrative poem) written in praise of Iraqi by one of his followers, Qazi Muhammad Qudsi, which is included in *Taufat*, illustrate the rebirth of Kashmir as an Islamic landscape through Iraqi's efforts:

He raised the banner of faith high in the sky.
In short in this ancient valley,
With the efforts of this spiritual guide,
Every idol house that was laid waste,
Became the site for a hospice.
Today instead of each fire-temple,
There is either a garden or a paradise….[77]

The blending of factually oriented history and the mythic mode within a single narrative frame was a critical aspect of these texts' methodological practice, and it was tied to their central narrative concern, which was to narrate the history of Kashmir's transition to Islam. It allowed them to place the particular within a broader literary and spiritual context, while also vernacularizing the universal language and religion to become part of the local definition of place. By recasting Kashmir as an Islamic space brought into existence and made governable by the activities of particular Sufi mystics, moreover, these texts served to legitimize the claims of those sects (and the nobles associated with them) to control certain shrines and their management, and by extension, exercise political influence in Kashmir. The process of 'localizing the global', which Pollock describes as a key element of vernacularization, was located at the intersection of spiritual and temporal power in Kashmir. At the same time, these texts highlight the dialectical nature of the relationship between the cosmopolitan and the vernacular, which as Pollock points out, are cultural forms that are 'not just historically constituted but mutually constitutive.'[78]

Hybrid Temporalities and Sacred Spaces: Interweaving the Political and Spiritual

There is no doubt that the texts discussed here were deeply concerned with the past, and that their authors structured their narratives in such a way that the past sat in judgement over the present and at times even the future. Temporality, thus, was expressed not in terms of a single narrative stream progressing in a linear fashion, but rather as several overlapping streams. In this

'hybrid' or 'mixed' temporality, two different types of narrative time came together: historical time (or 'the time of great families and kings') in which political events took place, and sacred time (or 'once upon a time'[79]) within which Sufi mystics enacted their miracles. Historical time remained subservient to sacred time, and these two temporal modes frequently coincided to resolve narrative crises with the ultimate purpose of rendering temporal power itself compliant to spiritual authority. Thus not infrequently, the texts conflated the origins of Islam in Kashmir through the activities of Sufi mystics and Islamic prophets with the origins of the space of Kashmir itself, as well as to the foundation of its Sultanate. To an extent, by presenting Kashmir as a sacred space located both within and outside calendrical time, the texts were reminding the rulers and noble groups, who were engaged in constant warfare to divide and control Kashmir, of the true ideal of kingship.

Taufat's main narrative is structured, as pointed out, around the peregrinations of Shamsuddin Iraqi to and from, and within Kashmir. This was a means of incorporating Kashmir into a larger sacred space and transmitting to it 'remembered geographies',[80] which by association rendered this new place of settlement for the Nurbakhshiya into a divine landscape. In a broad sense the organizing principle of the narrative is chronological, in that it begins with Iraqi's foray into the mystical life and his ultimate attachment to the Nurbakhshiya Sufi order in Central Asia, his journeys to and activities within Kashmir as ambassador and missionary, and his demise. Accordingly, it gives precise (*hijri*) dates for these events. At another level, the narrative suspends this particular chronology and sense of location by moving back and forth in time and space to give the reader/listener a sense that Iraqi existed at the same time as, and interacted with, distinguished Sufis from the past and present and could therefore also exist in the future. This is possible because the text has several secondary narratives that define and highlight the primary narrative line.

A particularly important micro narrative is the emergence and development of the Nurbakhshiya sect itself in Central Asia and the vagaries of the fortunes of its primary followers. A large part of the early narrative is devoted to the founding of the sect by Nurbakhsh,

his persecution by the Timurid sultan, Shah Rukh, and the difficulties faced by its followers in Central Asia after his death. It details the life of Nurbakhsh's son and spiritual successor, Shah Qasim Faizbakhsh, who ultimately became Shaykh Shamsuddin Iraqi's spiritual guide.[81] Iraqi's life is linked to the biography of the sect as we learn about his birth in Suliqan, Iran, where Nurbakhsh eventually settled after his wanderings, and where Iraqi's father became his dedicated disciple, retreating into a life of penance and seclusion. Another connected micro narrative within the text, which has been mentioned earlier, is the discussion of Sayyid Ali Hamadani as a Nurbakhshiya mystic in Central Asia and his advent into Kashmir, which is designed to give the reader/listener the impression that Hamadani and Iraqi were operating within the same temporal frame to convert Kashmir into an Islamic landscape.

In a very real sense, then, narratives such as *Taufat* memorialized Kashmir's conversion into an Islamic space through its placement within connected networks of migration and settlement of Sufi mystics, as they travelled to create a 'wider Muslim memory space'.[82]

Another significant narrative technique used in *Taufat* is the selective interweaving of Kashmir's political past with the past of the land's transition to Islam, offering Iraqi as the latest in a long, illustrious line of spiritual figures that brought the true light of Islam to the benighted political classes and people of Kashmir. The text details the accomplishments of Hamadani's son, Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, in promoting Islam in Kashmir, including his persuasion of Sultan Sikandar (r. 1389–1413) to construct the Hamadaniyah hospice to commemorate Sayyid Ali Hamadani's activities in Kashmir.[83] Kashmiri takes this opportunity to berate Sultan Sikandar's successor, Sultan Zain ul-Abidin (r. 1420–70), for rolling back his father's reforms in the realm of religion by patronizing 'infidelity, apostasy, polytheism, corruption and dualism'.[84] He attributes the Sultan's revival of polytheistic traditions to the fact that he was a young boy when his father, Sultan Sikandar, the iconoclast who brought many infidels and idol worshippers into the Islamic fold, died. This left the boy in the hands of infidels and heretics, whose

‘despicable progeny … led him astray from the path of guidance, devotion, and belief’.[85] The text implies that it was these ideas, encouraged by Zain ul-Abidin, that led to the eventual decline of Islam in the Valley and brought about the dismal religious environment that confronted Iraqi when he arrived in Kashmir.

Interweaving sacred and political temporalities, alongside time and space, are particularly apparent in *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* completed in 1579 by Sayyid Ali, a member of one of the noble families of Kashmir (his mother was Sultan Nazuk Shah’s sister). The text has been labelled a tarikh by modern historians, since it presents a more or less chronological narrative of the Sultans of Kashmir (along with their dates of rule in hijri) and appears to make a distinction between the political activities of rulers and the miraculous acts of Sufi saints. On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that the text renders the political narrative of Kashmir’s past subject to and controlled by its sacred narrative, as all narrative crises (usually articulated as threats to Islam) are resolved through the divine intervention of saints or the miraculous powers of especially blessed rulers themselves. Indeed, the text directly ties the arrival of the Hamadani Sufi mystics to spread the word of Islam into Kashmir with the placement of its Sultanate on a solid (Islamic) footing. This was not only meant to reiterate the idea of Kashmir as sacred space during a time when the territory was under siege from internal and external forces, but also to provide templates for the possible resolution of the political conflicts amongst a variety of assailants plaguing the polity by putting forward a discussion of ideal kingship.

After all, Sayyid Ali characterizes his text at the outset as a *risala* (an epistle; a formal or didactic letter) rather than a tarikh, which was written to recount the impact of Hamadani’s advent in Kashmir. Unlike *Dastur* and *Taufat*, he seeks no other form of authentication beyond this, since that in itself was enough to legitimize his enterprise. The text begins with the words ‘it is explicitly evident’, followed by the statement that Sayyid Ali Hamadani deputed a group of Sayyids to proceed to Kashmir from Ghore in order to report on social and political conditions in that region.[86] The history of Kashmir, for the author, clearly begins at this moment; the rulers that predated this time, including the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir,

Rinchen Shah, and the founder of the Kashmiri Sultanate, Shah Mir, were not worth mentioning. In this first section, the text follows a broadly chronological, political narrative, written, similar to *Taufat*, as a series of encounters between Islam and infidelity. The rulers of Kashmir, however, are more central to the narrative than in *Taufat*, as they are introduced to and inducted into the true faith by Hamadani and his disciples. Thus, the text had the ultimate objective of rendering Hamadani as the only legitimate source of Islam in Kashmir and of indigenizing his Sufi order by placing it within the narrative of Kashmir's political and spiritual past.

The narrative discusses each ruler's reign from the perspective of his relationship to the Sufi mystics from Central Asia. While lauding the treatment meted out to the Sayyids by Sultan Shihabuddin (r. 1354–73), who, according to Sayyid Ali, gave them his daughters in marriage and bestowed lands on them for their upkeep,[87] the text clearly points out that the desired relationship between the Sayyids and Kashmir's rulers was not established until the reign of Sultan Qutubuddin (r. 1373–89). According to the text, Qutubuddin showed Sayyid Hamadani due reverence by receiving him barefooted, while Hamadani's 'blessed footsteps' transformed Kashmir 'into a match for paradise'.[88] This was accomplished by Sayyid Ali Hamadani, states the text, by gradually teaching the people and the Sultan of the error of their infidel ways, thereby initiating them into the true path. According to the text, 'Although there were three or four mosques in this land, no *azan* (summons/call for prayers) was given and no congregational prayers were offered. The five daily prayers and Friday prayers were for the first time established and offered'.[89]

The author mentions two un-Islamic customs followed by Qutubuddin that Hamadani corrected, a mention of which can be found in almost all later Persian histories of Kashmir. First, Hamadani taught Qutubuddin how to button his gown towards the right side as worn by Muslims (instead of the left side as he usually wore). And more importantly, on discovering that the Sultan was married to two blood sisters, which was unlawful in Islam, the Sayyid persuaded him to divorce one. This produced a blessed result since the one whom the Sultan divorced took to spiritual practices and became a renowned mystic, while the one who remained his wife

gave birth to Sikandar, who, as Sultan, was to become a champion of Islam in the land of Kashmir. The text attributes Qutubuddin's earlier behaviour to his lack of knowledge of the sharia, as well as his fear of rebellion if he undertook Islamic practices, since most of the officials in his court were 'polytheists'.[90] Through Hamadani's efforts, according to the text, Qutubuddin was reborn as an ideal (Islamic) ruler, worthy of ruling the now transformed, Islamic land of Kashmir.

The text solidifies the relationship between Islam, in particular Hamadani's sect, and Kashmiri kingship in its description of the advent of Hamadani's son and spiritual successor, Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, and his companions, to Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Sikandar. The text attributes Sikandar's actions, such as breaking idols, imposing *jaziya*, and forcing Hindus to convert to Islam, entirely to the influence of Muhammad Hamadani. The Sultan, according to the text, 'declared himself to be his [Muhammad Hamadani's] follower with all sincerity of conviction and in complete faith became his disciple in word and deed'.[91] The text notes the ritual transaction between royal and saintly authority, as well as between Kashmir and Islamic Central Asia through its description of the construction of Sayyid Ali Hamadani's hospice, Khanqah-i Hamadaniyah, by Sultan Sikandar at Muhammad Hamadani's behest.

According to the text, at the completion of the khanqah, Muhammad Hamadani offered Sultan Sikandar a diamond he had carried for him from Badakhshan as a token of his blessing on the Sultan and his rule, while Sikandar offered him three villages as jagir. In addition, Muhammad Hamadani obtained a written document from the Sultan protecting the interests of the caretakers of the khanqah, as well as providing villages for its maintenance.[92] After this moment, Sultan Sikandar undertook activities to remove infidelity from the land: 'In fact, in every village and town, where a temple existed it was demolished at the behest of Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani and a mosque built in its place. Thus, Kashmir became like a paradise'.[93]

While such activities were attributed in *Dastur* and *Taufat* largely to the enterprise of the Sufi shaykhs and their followers, in this text, the ruling authority became the conduit through which to carry out the cleansing of the Kashmiri landscape for Islam. The narrative thus validates the actions of the Sultans by associating them with the sacred mission of the Sufi mystics of Central Asia, thereby reminding rulers and aspirants to political power in the present of their true sources of legitimacy.[94]

Notably, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* does not condemn Sultan Sikandar's son, Sultan Zain ul-Abidin, as a promoter of apostasy and infidelity in Kashmir, as *Taufat* does, for instance. Zain ul-Abidin is lauded in the text, not in terms of his activities in the realm of patronage of the arts, culture, and literature (as in later Persian histories). Instead, he is presented as an ideal ruler with almost mystical powers of intuition, and also as a transformer of the landscape of Kashmir.

The text narrates an incident in which Zain ul-Abidin's son, Haider Khan, hatched a plot to kill his father to acquire the throne. However, Zain ul-Abidin intuited his son's intentions and sent him to fetch his rosary; when Haider Khan entered the room, he saw the Sultan sitting there with the rosary in hand. Recognizing his father's spiritual powers, which were apparent in his ability to be present in two places at once, he confessed and repented his intentions.[95] The text also describes Zain ul-Abidin's building activities in detail, as well as his attempts at rendering several forested areas of the land habitable by building villages and redirecting springs to irrigate them.[96] The story related in the text of Zain ul-Abidin's construction of an island with a grand palace called Zaina Lank on Wular Lake over the ruins of a submerged temple,[97] is reminiscent of the origin stories of Kashmir in which land is reclaimed from water and made habitable by spiritual authorities such as Sage Kashyap or the Prophet Solomon.

Ultimately, however, even the ideal Sultan could be fully validated only after he had submitted to the mightier power of the saints, in this case, to the disciple of Shaykh Nooruddin Rishi, or Nund Rishi, the founder and leader of the indigenous mystical tradition. The text relates the story of the Sultan's encounter with Baba Zain ul-Din

Rishi and its aftermath as a moral lesson to those in power. The story is also meant to highlight the supremacy and purity of spiritual power, which had to be protected from the taint of political authority:

> One day Sultan Zain ul-Abidin paid a visit to the Baba, who at that time had gone to perform ablutions. The Sultan sat down on his prayer-mat. The spiritual master (*Pir-i-man' uvi*, i.e., Maulana Rumi) has (rightly) said: 'I seek from God good manners and etiquette, as an unmannerly person is deprived of Divine grace'. When the Baba returned (to his chamber) he was displeased at the behaviour of the Sultan and when he left, the Baba cleansed himself by performing ablutions afresh: *His inner self was pure and bright, like a mirror*. When he went towards the prayer mat, his attendant reminded him that the Sultan had sat on that. The Baba remarked: 'It has been defiled by the impurity of the worldly authority, therefore it (the prayer mat) should be washed'. When the Sultan came to know about this he felt hurt and sent the Baba to Tibet (Ladakh).[98]

In Tibet, the Baba carried out many conversions and miracles to help people. In the meantime, the Sultan began to suffer intense pain from a foot ailment caused by an infection, which none of his physicians were able to cure. He sent his son to invite the Baba back to Kashmir, and on his return, sought the Baba's forgiveness, after which his foot was cured.

This story, as the other stories related in the text regarding the relationship between rulers and saints, are didactic tales that serve to create 'history with a moral meaning'.[99] But this episodic telling of the past that drew on moral lessons from Sufi authorities such as Rumi was ultimately designed to articulate a theory of ideal kingship and produce the maximum impact in redrawing the relationships between particular Sufi sects and political authority in late-sixteenth-century Kashmir.[100]

Indeed, Sayyid Ali's description of the period after the death of Zain ul-Abidin as one of the decline of the Sultanate and of general political chaos corresponds in the text with the absence of correct spiritual figures to guide the actions of the Sultan's successors. According to the text, the proverbial blessings bestowed on Sultan Qutubuddin and his successors by Sayyid Ali Hamadani when he handed over his cap to the Sultan, which the latter reportedly always wore under his crown, as did his successors, deserted the dynasty

when Sultan Fath Shah had the cap buried with his body to help him enter heaven along with the *sadaat*. 'After that day', writes Sayyid Ali, 'seditions, riots, and disturbances became a routine matter in Kashmir'.[101] In contrast to the earlier period, the political narrative of the sixteenth century is devoid of any stories of interactions between rulers and Sufi saints, recounting instead the divisive policies of each ruler in quick succession in a rather bland manner.

Not surprisingly, the only spiritual figure discussed in the text during this period is Shamsuddin Iraqi, who is clearly meant to serve as a foil to Hamadani in the text. His 'inauspicious steps' into Kashmir are held responsible, in no small measure, for the political crisis that followed, since he created dissensions among the political elite of the state while converting people to his sect on the sly. In this case, the spiritual figure's claims to religious authority are shown as being dubious (Sayyid Ali points out that Iraqi had appointed himself as the successor of Muhammad Nurbakhsh rather than being given the title). As a result, his intervention into political affairs produced far from salutary results. In addition, the text alludes to Iraqi's attempts to sabotage the rebuilding of Hamadani's khanqah, thus reflecting the sectarian competition over the control of this symbolic space (as apparent in *Taufat* as well), as well as the importance of casting history in terms of the legitimacy of certain sects over others to control this sacred space.[102]

The second half of the text suspends the chronological political narrative altogether in favour of a sacred account of the lives and actions of Shaykh Nooruddin Rishi, his disciples, and the physical sites connected to their birth, travels, death, and burial in Kashmir. As a result, spatiality replaces temporality as the main driving force in this part of the narrative, which attempts to reiterate the primacy of Kashmir as a sacred space in the minds of its readers and listeners, partly by Islamizing this indigenous sect of mystics. The section is replete with stories about the miraculous feats of the Rishis in remote corners of Kashmir, some repeated from the earlier section, such as the aforementioned story of the encounter between Sultan Zain ul-Abidin and Baba Zain ul-Din Rishi.[103] Recognizing that each of the Rishis was a spiritual stalwart, the author notes that it was befitting to discuss their miracles individually.

Most of the stories are associated with the role played by the Rishis in converting Kashmir and its people to Islam, particularly in the rural interior where the reach of the Sayyids was minimal, thus appropriating this indigenous sect of mystics who practiced asceticism and vegetarianism, into the fold of Islam.[104] While legitimizing them as true spiritual figures with authority over temporal power, it also validates foreign Sufi mystics as indigenous through their association with Rishis. Nooruddin, the founder of the sect, is presented as being Sayyid Ali Hamadani's true spiritual successor, since he was tested by Muhammad Hamadani, found to be of the highest spiritual merit, and given his blessings. According to the text, when asked to write the *kalima* (Muslim creed) on the wall by Hamadani, Nooruddin picked up and chewed on some coal from the fire, then spat towards the wall, on which appeared the appropriate words as though written in ink.[105] The relationship between the two was sealed when the Sayyid gifted the Shaykh a ritual keepsake that he kept under his cap throughout his life.[106] Sayyid Ali writes:

In the inner part of Kashmir,
the blessings come from Mir Syed Ali Hamadani.
The Pir of Pirs Noor-ud-Din Reshi,
gets embellishment through his benevolence.
Since he became penitent before the Mir,
for that reason he became his deputy.[107]

The text then illustrates how Nooruddin went about converting other Rishi ascetics to Islam. The narrative of the encounters related in this context is similar to that of other Sufi–Jogi (Hindu ascetic) encounters recorded in many Indo-Persian tazkiras and tarikhs. In one such instance in this text, Bamu Sadhu, an idol worshipper, passed his days in meditation in a cave, where every morning he cooked a pot of rice for himself and his idols. One morning, he was approached by Nooruddin, who asked him for some food. Bamu Sadhu replied that there was no rice left in the pot since he had eaten already and distributed the rest of the rice amongst the idols. The Shaykh told him that his pot was still full, which, to the Sadhu's

surprise, was indeed found to be true. After that, the Sadhu began to levitate and Nooruddin's slippers flew out behind him. Witnessing this, Bamu Sadhu found himself ready to accept the true faith and was renamed Baba Bamuddin, the first of the four khalifas of Shaykh Nooruddin.[108]

This story resembles the story told earlier in the narrative about Sayyid Ali Hamadani's conversion of a jogi who kept people's hearts and minds under control through the performance of *istidraj* (false miracles). In this case too, the levitating jogi was brought back to earth through the flying shoe of one of Hamadani's disciples, which beat him on the head, ultimately leading to his conversion to Islam.[109] These stories of encounters—between Rishis and Central Asian mystics, and between jogis and Sufis—can be read as examples of 'competitive spirituality', as argued by Muzaffar Alam in the case of descriptions of similar encounters in Indo-Persian Sufi texts.[110] In the case of Kashmiri texts, they also served the specific political purpose of indigenizing Sufi sects, while at the same time validating Rishis as true Muslims.

While the stories about the Rishis transcended temporal space and could be universally applicable, what is striking about them is their location in very specific, named, geographic spaces within Kashmir. The identity of each of the Rishis is linked to the particular villages within which they performed their miracles and were converted, and in turn converted others, to Islam. For instance, the text describes Baba Shukruddin thus:

> He was one of the greatest disciples of Baba Zain-ud-Din. His birth place and residency was at village Aarat pargana Machhamoon. While in service of his guide, he went into seclusion at Shang Pal situated in pargana Khoihama. He was there for a long time. He was a man of inspiration and miracles, perceptions and endeavours. At last he shifted from that place and went to Shirakoot situated at the far end of Wular Lake. His holy tomb is situated there.[111]

The reader/listener could quite literally see the places marked by the peregrinations of the Rishis in the interiors and corners of Kashmir, thereby rendering the entire landscape sacred, and reclaimed for Islam. Much like Sufi saints, the Rishis tamed the beings in the

forests (demons) and caves (snakes) to make large areas of Kashmir habitable.[112] Further, their spiritual favour on the landscape lingered long after their physical passage from this world.[113] *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* ends with the words: 'The hitherto mentioned Rishis, who remained devoted to their respective spiritual guides (*murshid*) and are buried in various places in Kashmir, were all men of elegance and intuition'.[114] A mention of the exact location of their tombs was designed to bind the space together and endow the idea of Kashmir with spiritual and territorial coherence beyond history.

The narrative structure of the texts discussed here was defined by multiple temporalities and an intimate linkage between temporality and spatiality, as well as spiritual and political authority. The narrative of kings was subservient—and far less spatially sensitive—to the narrative of mystical, miraculous acts that had the power to exist simultaneously in historical and mythical time and in specific locations. These acts vividly captured the spreading influence of Sufi mystics and indigenous divines in Kashmir's every nook and corner as they reclaimed, and improved the land—village by village, spring by spring, and forest by forest. They also created the sacredness of its landscape, allowing it too to be inscribed eternally beyond history, as well as in real, experienced time. Visualizing particular sacred spaces within Kashmir, and its transformation as a whole into an especially blessed landscape through a telling of stories of spiritual conversion, thus, was a critical narrative move made by texts such as *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*. It allowed for a legitimization of Islam as a whole and of specific sects in particular, while also endorsing the idea that ideal kingship—and the ability to bring the political dissensions in Kashmir to an end—belonged to those rulers who sought the company of rightfully guided mystics.

From Islamic Space to Political Territory

The central concern of *Baharistan-i Shahi* (Abode of the Spring of Kings), the final text under consideration here, is not how and by whom Islam was established in Kashmir, but rather to probe the

causes of political divisiveness that were renting asunder the contemporary Kashmiri polity. Its narration of the past was shaped by a palpable awareness of Kashmir as a political territory, not simply, as in the narratives discussed earlier, a discursive sacred (Islamic) space with a political past. Even as the text marked space territorially, so too did it define time in historical and chronological terms, particularly in the recent past. Sufis continued to perform their miraculous feats, both within this temporal frame and sometimes outside of it, but their actions were not the primary driving force of the narrative. Instead, political operatives of various kinds—such as rulers, nobles, and even Sufis acting in a political capacity—controlled and defined the shape of the narrative. I want to present *Baharistan* here, thus, as a hinge narrative to mark the transition to the composition of Persian historical texts whose primary focus was to record the past—located in both mythical and historical time—of Kashmir as a territorial unit with marked, albeit labile, boundaries.

Baharistan was composed during a period (1585–1614) when the rather messy political transition from Chak to Mughal rule was taking place in Kashmir. It is thus interested in not only explaining this situation, but also in giving the readers a sense of the main characters involved in the moment of transition and the events leading up to it. Its author does not provide his name in the text, although he does state that his great grandfather, Mulla Hussam ud-Din, migrated to Kashmir from Ghazna with the Kubrawiya mystic, Baba Haji Adham, during the reign of Sultan Sikandar.[115] Most modern historians of Kashmir have conjectured that the author was Shia, since he praises Shamsuddin Iraqi's actions in Kashmir.[116] Others have suggested that he may have been in the service of the Baihaqi Sayyids and composed the text in praise of his patron and the Sayyids in general.[117] It is difficult to reconcile these two views, since the Baihaqis were arrayed against Iraqi's followers in this period, and the author roundly criticizes Yacub Shah Chak's persecution of Sunnis during his rule.

Rather than attempting to pin down the author's ideological proclivities from the text, it is more fruitful to study the text from the perspective of its author's intent in composing it, which appears to have been much broader than merely giving voice to a particular

religious group's agenda. The purpose of the text is to reflect on the contemporary political situation in Kashmir by tracing the historical trajectories of the main actors, both from within and without, that had shaped its recent past. This would explain the insistence through the text on drawing the literal and figurative boundaries of the kingdom of Kashmir in the face of threats from inside and outside its frontiers. Moreover, a study of the text reveals the complex religio-political character of Kashmiri society, which the Shia-Sunni dichotomy does not adequately capture. It becomes clear from this text, as well as those discussed earlier, that it is more accurate to think of the period in terms of intra-Sufi competition for followers overlaid on political contests for power amongst the nobility, the lines of which cut across the Shia-Sunni divide.

It is probable that the author had held some kind of official position, and may even have been part of the mobile Kashmiri court during the years in the late sixteenth century when a contingent of the Chaks continued to battle Mughal forces. However, it is also clear that the text was not composed in any official capacity. The chronogram at the end of the text suggests that the composition was a self-appointed task on the part of the author: 'I asked my intellect what the right path was. / It asked me why I was wasting my time. / And told me to narrate the names of the kings of Kashmir (*Nameh-i Shahan-i Kashmir*)'.[118] The only mode of authentication presented by the author, thus, unlike the texts discussed earlier or the later Persian tarikhs, drew on his own self, not on his association with particular Sufi mystics, hospices, political groups, the court, or even the community. Further, the author makes no mention of his sources, although it is apparent that he relied on a broad range of Sanskrit and Persian texts, including the ones discussed in this chapter.[119] Narrating Kashmir's past, defined as a record of its successive kings, was a self-directed action on the part of the anonymous individual.

This past necessarily began with the origin of Kashmir in the distant past, beyond quantifiable time. The text thus records the origin legend of the emergence of Kashmir from water, as recounted in Sanskrit texts and Kashmiri oral traditions. The author specifically attributes his account of this story, which is nevertheless told with

slight variations, to the ‘chroniclers of the rulers of the domain of Kashmir’, who had recorded in the Kashmiri language (*ba qalam-i Kashmiri*; presumably Sanskrit in the Sarada script), that ‘in the distant past the land we call Kashmir had remained submerged in water for two thousand years’. The author states that the region was called Kashyap Mar after the hermit Kashyap, who dwelt in its neighbourhood, and who made a supplication to God to create dry land there. God then commanded three angels to drain the water and create as much dry land as required by Kashyap. The dry land that thus emerged was named Kashshile, meaning ‘chiselled stone’. Subsequently, the land was settled by another individual who sowed seeds and raised crops, and made the place habitable. A large number of people came from surrounding regions to settle on the land. ‘This land’, states the text, ‘has been called Kashmir’.[120]

Interestingly, the essence of the story as told in the Sanskrit narratives is retained here, although it is related in far less detail and is rather vague about the characters involved. For instance, unlike the Sanskrit narratives, there is no mention of the demon Jalodhbhava, who lived in the lake from which the land of Kashmir emerged, or that Kashyap Rishi prayed to the gods Brahma and Vishnu for their help in slaying this demon, following which the gods finally drained the lake and succeeded in vanquishing him, thereby giving birth to the land of Kashmir. In this story, instead, Hindu gods are replaced by God Almighty and his three angels, who drain the lake and create land. Yet, the text does not link the birth of Kashmir (the draining of water and creation of dry land) to the actions of the Prophet Solomon and his army of jinns, a story that was, as we have seen, already part of the Persian textual tradition.

Similarly, the discussion of the early history of Kashmir under Hindu rule in *Baharistan*, albeit brief, is noteworthy for a number of reasons. It is written as a series of tales rather than as a chronological survey of successive kings, drawing most likely as much from oral accounts as from textual accounts, since some of the stories are slightly different from the stories related about the early kings in Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini*.[121] In general, since this is an account of the remote past, the text does not seem to be interested in recording specific dates for the reigns of rulers or their actions

(there are no dates mentioned in this section until the later rulers), but rather in illuminating certain themes and ideas about them to its readers and listeners. In that vein, the text only discusses the rule of noteworthy kings of yore, who were known for their building activities, such as Pravarsena, who built the city of Srinagar (the account of the kings of the ancient period begins with this first-century monarch). It also discusses Lalitaditya, who was known for his foreign conquests, and according to the text he 'brought under his sway the entire world from the borders of China to the furthest west'.[122] The text presents the boundaries of Kashmir as rather labile in this period, not as a result of outside threats, but from the conquest of distant lands by Kashmiri rulers, acts clearly lauded by the author as displaying their valour and Kashmir's strength in the distant past.

As the past draws nearer, however, the power of the early kings over distant lands is replaced in the text with pressures on Kashmir's frontiers from lands surrounding it, some leading to salutary outcomes, while others bring about death and destruction. In this respect, *Baharistan* is concerned with tracing the fashioning of the nature of the land, much as the texts discussed earlier, but as a political entity with distinct boundaries. The narrative is thus driven by the entry of forces, individuals, and ideas from outside Kashmir that are eventually indigenized in the process, even as they transform the land itself. There are innumerable instances of this in the text for the period of the decline of the Hindu rulers and the establishment of the Sultanate in Kashmir in the early fourteenth century, including the attack by the Turk Zulchu's forces and the entry of Shah Mir, Rinchen, and Shaykh Bulbul Shah into Kashmir.[123] *Baharistan* presents these events as interlinked, as they act upon each other, ultimately leading to the establishment of the Kashmiri Sultanate under Shah Mir, or Sultan Shamsuddin.

Its account of the coming of Shah Mir to Kashmir from Swadgir (Swat) differs from that given by Jonaraja in his *Rajatarangini*, in that it draws his line of descent from the rulers of Swadgir (rather than as a descendent of Arjun, the Pandava, as Jonaraja writes). It endows his grandfather with the ability to foresee future events as a result of his spiritual training with prominent Sufi mystics. One of Shah Mir's

grandfather's observations about the future was that his son would have a son who would become the ruler of Kashmir and that his descendants would hold on to the throne for a long time. On hearing this, according to *Baharistan*, Shah Mir set off with his family for Kashmir, where around the same time Rinchen, the son of the ruler of Tibet, had also arrived, as had Lankar Chak, the ancestor of the Chaks, from Dardistan.[124] All three individuals were treated cordially by Raja Sahadev, the ruler of Kashmir, and given lands for their upkeep. Soon after their arrival, Kashmir was faced with the attack by Zulchu, a Turk from Central Asia, who pillaged, looted, and plundered the land. The political chaos that followed Sahadev's abandonment of Kashmir's capital for frontier regions, where he took refuge, allowed for the capture of Kashmir's throne by Rinchen, followed by Shah Mir.[125]

Baharistan writes the moment of Kashmir's transition to Islam, unlike the texts discussed earlier, into the political narrative of Kashmir's past. Rather than identifying Hamadani as the founder of Islam and Islamic rule in Kashmir and Sultans and Sufi mystics as his followers, for *Baharistan*, Kashmir's encounter with Islam began with Rinchen, the first Kashmiri ruler to officially accept Islam as his religion. The text presents Rinchen as a sagacious and just individual, even before he converted to Islam, which made the conversion during the course of his rule inevitable. According to *Baharistan*, Rinchen struggled between the faith of the infidels and that of the faithful, but:

> blessed as he was with a dispensation for justice, for 'God helps those who help themselves', he found the right path. He firmly decided that he would embrace the religion of the first man he would meet in the street after coming out of his house the next morning. He also resolved to join the community to which that man belonged. Next morning he came out of his house. The rays of the sun of divine guidance, bringing every object from darkness to light, liberated him from the darkness of ignorance and disbelief; for all of a sudden, in the neighborhood of his mansion, he saw a dervish offering *namaz* … with full devotion. He went towards him.… He asked the dervish his name and then about his religion and the sect he belonged to. The dervish told him that his name was Bulbul Qalandar, that his religion was Islam and that his community was that of Muslims.… Now he [Rinchen] subjected himself to the teachings of the religion of Mustafa (Prophet),

and the right principles of the truthful path of Murtaza (Ali) and embraced Islamic religion with sincerity and conviction.[126]

The text thus presents Kashmir's past through the lens of a negotiation between its centre and peripheries, as individuals at and beyond Kashmir's peripheries influenced the course of historical events and shaped the contours of its landscape, rendering it as both unique, as well as dependent on territories beyond it. In this regard, the text lays great emphasis on charting the trajectories of the noble families of Kashmir who came to play a significant role in sixteenth-century Kashmiri politics. For instance, the text discusses the lineage and emergence of the Sultans, Chaks, Magareys, and Chadurahs (Rainas) in quite a bit of detail. The most comprehensive account, however, is reserved for the family of the Baihaqi Sayyids, whose movement from Baihaq (Khorasan) to the court of Delhi during the time of Timur's invasions to finally end up in Sultan Sikandar's court, is recounted in great detail. Sufi mystics play a guiding role through this journey as they endowed the head of the family, Mir Sayyid Mahmud Baihaqi, with spiritual knowledge and important information about the courts of Delhi and Kashmir at crucial moments.[127] Significantly, the author links his own ancestor's journey to Kashmir with a prominent Kubrawiya saint to the general movement of Sayyids and Sufi mystics to Kashmir from Central Asian lands during Sultan Sikandar's reign.[128]

The author's concern with the interactions between external and internal forces in shaping Kashmir's history is apparent in his discussion of Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's rule, which he simultaneously praises and criticizes. The text applauds the Sultan for giving safe haven to the Baihaqi Sayyids by inviting them to his court when they were battling the Raja of Jasrota on the frontiers of Kashmir (the Sayyids held a jagir in the vicinity), a battle presented by the text as that between the army of the faithful and that of the infidels. At the same time, it points out that the Sultan took this step to stabilize his own authority, which was under threat during the early years of his rule from his foster brothers and the nobles supporting them. While the Sultan was a far cry from his father in the arena of the propagation of Islam—even giving encouragement to infidelity that

Shamsuddin Iraqi later took steps to eradicate by breaking idols and razing temples to the ground (in this portion the text reads much like *Taufat*)—*Baharistan* still lauds him for his patronage of arts and crafts, learning, and men of letters.[129] Even as Sultan Zain ul-Abidin is commended for his openness towards people, ideas, goods, and texts from outside the realm, *Baharistan* lists his greatest achievement as being the steps he took to ensure 'the safety and security of the boundaries of Kashmir from encroachments'. According to the text, this was something his descendants failed to do, leading to the chaos that characterized Kashmir's more recent past in the sixteenth century.[130]

Baharistan is clear that the crisis in Kashmiri politics was the result of internal battles amongst the Kashmiri nobility which led to the decline of the ability of the centre to control its peripheries, rather than because of the absence of rightfully guided Sufi mystics, as in the texts discussed thus far. The text laments the resultant loss of prestige of the realm of Kashmir, 'which had enjoyed fame and reputation in the lands of India', but could no longer even control its 'out-flanking areas', territories that were thus lost to the realm.[131] The rest of the text is devoted to descriptions, many in verse, of the battles among Kashmiri nobles and Sufi shaykhs such as Iraqi. In these verses, the boundaries of Kashmir constantly shift as the court loses control of outlying areas and defeated nobles from the centre retreat to the peripheries to regroup by making alliances with rulers on and beyond the frontier. Meanwhile, other individuals from beyond the frontier, such as Shamsuddin Iraqi, continue to shape Kashmir's past, in this case for the better. The text interweaves the politics of the period of the emergence of the Chaks as important political players in the first half of the sixteenth century, with Iraqi's presence and activities on Kashmir's landscape. Indeed, it attributes the success of the Chaks to their support of Iraqi's attempts at eradicating infidelity and darkness from the land and the resultant divine benediction that cemented their political position.[132]

Particularly in its later portions, *Baharistan* presents the court and the Sufi hospice as closely allied institutions, as Sufi mystics, as much as rulers and nobles, acted as political operators. The final

portion of the text is a comprehensive narration of the political and military maneuverings that led to the ultimate establishment of Mughal rule in Kashmir. The text regards this as the final triumph of outside forces in establishing control over Kashmir's centre as a result of the disunity and greed of the Kashmiri nobles and the inability of the Kashmiri court to defend its borders. While the early sections of the narrative read like a panegyric to Kashmir's ancient rulers who brought it fortune and territory, the later sections are marked by a distinctly elegiac tone as Kashmir descends into political chaos and ultimate conquest by the Mughals.

Baharistan's narrative structure was geared towards presenting Kashmir as a distinct historical space, created outside of time, but shaped into a political territory in historical time through a constant dialogue between a clearly demarcated (albeit shifting) centre and peripheries. Its record of the past was driven by the need to explain the contemporary political divisiveness in Kashmir. As a result, the actions of its rulers and other political operatives attempting to gain control of the centre had more significance for the narrative than Sufi mystics' activities to convert the land to Islam. However, the miracles performed by Sufi shaykhs and their disciples were seamlessly incorporated into the political narrative as they contributed to the emergence of political entities, such as the Sultanate, and the later divisions on Kashmir's body politic. The text thus begins with the origins of Kashmir's landscape itself (which predates Islam) rather than the origins of Islam on its landscape. However, for *Baharistan* the contours of Kashmir as particular territory were shaped precisely by its shifting relationships with ideas and individuals from much wider geographies, thus rendering it, not unlike in the texts discussed earlier, into a simultaneously vernacular and universal entity.

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The methodological features of Kashmiri narrative practice in the latter half of the sixteenth century were defined by a dialogue among shifting temporalities and multiple ideas of spatiality. Fabulous geographies and sacred time co-existed, and sometimes collided

with, historically defined territory and chronological time within the narrative structures of the Persian texts discussed here. The narrative conventions of these texts were geared towards describing and thus controlling the account of a crucial and ongoing moment in Kashmir's past, present, and future—the arrival of Islam, its continuing Islamization, and the establishment of a Kashmiri Sultanate based on true Islamic principles. While making moral judgements about the present in light of a more principled past in which kings submitted to the authority of true Sufi mystics, the texts were as much concerned with advancing and consolidating the claims of particular groups to power and land within a deeply riven Kashmiri polity.

Water emerged as a powerful trope with which to bind the landscape to Islam (partly by rehearsing Kashmir's divine origins), and as a means to assert control over the natural and political landscape of Kashmir. By emphasizing the agency of particular Sufi mystics in transforming forestland and riparian landscapes—from dangerous arenas inhabited by demons and deities (or unsettled, pre-Islamic peoples) to disciplined gardens and prosperous domains inhabited by god-fearing agriculturists—the narratives staked a claim for specific sects over the most fertile land in the Kashmir Valley. This further endowed Sufi groups with the legitimacy to support or challenge the claims of particular political actors to govern the realm that the activities of mystics had made habitable.

Produced by individuals with patronage networks linked to Sufi hospices, and by extension particular groups of notables, the texts narrated Kashmir's sacred and secular pasts in tandem through a set of stories that drew on Sanskrit, Persian, Kashmiri, Islamic, and Sufi textual and oral traditions. Whether these stories were about Sayyid Ali Hamadani or Sultan Zain ul-Abidin or any other Sufi mystic or monarch, or the land itself, they were designed for wide and easy dissemination through the oral and written spheres, as courtly elites, shrine attendants, wandering pirs and mystics, as well as elderly men and women recounted them at a variety of venues. The circular trajectory of these stories between textuality and orality as well as multiple linguistic spheres will be discussed in a later chapter. Suffice it to say here that much like the narrative

conventions of the texts themselves, which were widely recognizable, and yet particular to Kashmir, the idea of Kashmir as narrated within them too was as a particular place cast in universal terms.

These texts, then, were critical to vernacularizing Persian and Islam in the Kashmiri narrative and popular imaginations. Their claims to historicity were based on defining and discussing the advent of Islam in Kashmir, and the impact of this event, writ large, on the Kashmiri landscape, thereby (re)creating Kashmir itself. By conflating the trope of the origins of Islam through saintly activities with that of the origins of Kashmir, these texts cemented the relationship between saintly genealogies and the genealogy of the land. This was formulated within and across these texts through an intimate dialogue amongst the ideas of Kashmir as sacred, territorial, and historical space. At the same time, in the context of political conflict, they provided a space for a range of groups to advance their own claims to political legitimacy through a participation in debates over the nature of Islam in Kashmir. Although written in a cosmopolitan language, the texts performed vernacular functions in drawing the contours of a specific place, linking it to a particular religious sensibility, and creating a sense of attachment to both.

The interaction between the idea of Kashmir as a sacred space that existed beyond quantifiable temporality and a political territory located within historical time continued to define the subsequent narrations of Kashmir's past. *Baharistan-i Shahi* signalled the turning point within the narrative tradition with its greater emphasis on describing and demarcating the territorial contours of Kashmir as a political entity that was nevertheless a place profoundly shaped by Sufi mystics. The next chapter considers the texts composed in Mughal Kashmir as they self-consciously drew on earlier Sanskrit and Persian textual narratives as well as Mughal tarikhs to produce, it suggests, a specifically Kashmiri tarikh tradition. While narrating its past, this tradition laid claim to defining Kashmir and its position within the larger Mughal Empire.

[1] Slaje (2004), p. 9. Slaje's point is based, at least in part, on the ideas introduced by the late-nineteenth-century orientalist project in Kashmir. M. A. Stein, the orientalist scholar who dedicated several years to editing and translating Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* in the late nineteenth century, dismissed Kashmir's Persian chronicles as having no claim to 'any independent authority' on the early periods of Kashmir's history. See Stein, 'Introduction', vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 29. See also Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 182. For a detailed discussion of the late-nineteenth-century orientalist project in Kashmir and its outcome, see Chapter 4 of this book.

[2] For a discussion of the terms cosmopolitanism, vernacularism, and universalism in the comparative context of South Asia and Europe, see Pollock (2000), pp. 591–625.

[3] See, for instance, Gauhar (2009); Wani (2005); Sufi, 2 vols. (1974) [1949]. Hagiographical narratives from a variety of religions and regions, not just Sufi narratives from South Asia, have been subject to the same treatment by historians. See, for instance, Bynum (1987). Examples from South Asian history abound. This is not to suggest, of course, that these histories are worthless; indeed they have been critical to the establishment of the historical narratives of particular regions from a variety of perspectives.

[4] Rafiqi (2003), p. lxviii.

[5] Renard (2008), p. 257.

[6] Safi (2000), p. 266. See also Green (2004a), pp. 207–25.

[7] Safi (2000), p. 267.

[8] Renard (2008), p. 257.

[9] Roberts and Roberts (2003), p. 38.

[10] Ernst (1992), p. 88.

[11] Ibid., p. 85.

[12] Green (2004a), p. 216.

[13] Green (2012), pp. 14–15.

[14] Ibid., p. 16.

[15] Murphy, 'Introductory Essay', in Murphy (2011a), pp. 4–5. None of the essays in the volume engage with Sufi hagiographical texts. See also, Murphy (2007), pp. 345–65; Pinch, 'History, Devotion', in Ali (2002), pp. 367–99.

[16] Novetzke, 'The Theographic and the Historiographic', in Murphy (2011a), pp. 119–22.

[17] Stephen Berkwitz makes a similar argument with reference to Sri Lankan *vamsa*s, or Buddhist histories, the writing, copying, reading, and listening of which, he argues, was 'understood as a morally productive act'. Berkwitz (2004), p. 199; see also, pp. 193–9.

[18] As Francis Robinson has argued, within Islamic scholarship, person to person transmission was considered the most reliable and authoritative form of the transmission of knowledge in the absence of the original author. See Robinson (1993), pp. 234–9.

[19] Novetzke (2009), pp. 39–40.

[20] Guha (2009), p. 288.

[21] For the problematic nature of establishing a single context to 'unlock the meaning of a text', see Berkwitz (2004), pp. 50–7; Inden, 'Introduction', in Inden, Walters, and Ali (2000a), pp. 5–15.

[22] For the importance of grounding narratives of the past in their social history, see Guha (2004), pp. 1084–103.

[23] This was by no means solely a feature of sixteenth-century Kashmir, since the tussle between centre and periphery has historically been very much an aspect of Kashmiri politics, leading to dynastic transitions since the early period. However, sixteenth-century Kashmir was marked by unusually intense competition among a variety of groups to gain territorial control over Kashmir's centre. Majeed, 'Introduction', in Majeed (2007), pp. vii–xiv; Hangloo (2000), pp. 29–33. For a detailed history of this period, see Hasan (1959); Parmu (1969); Sufi (1974), vol. I; Rafiqi (2003); Wani (2005).

[24] Hasan (1959), pp. 125–44.

[25] Bashir (2003), p. 199.

[26] The individuals who managed khanqahs formed part of the religio-political elite that had migrated to Kashmir from Central Asia and Persia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries during the Sultanate period. They had established themselves in Kashmir through their spiritual activities as well as material patronage by the Sultans, who offered them not only *jagir*s (land grants) for their personal use and the maintenance of khanqahs, but also their daughters in marriage. In return, the Sufi mystics and Sayyids endowed Sultans with legitimacy to rule over Kashmir within the bounds of prescribed Islamic laws. According to Hangloo, the jagirs eventually became hereditary as Sayyids designated 'their heirs as administrators in perpetuity with a fixed income'. See Hangloo (2000), pp. 13, 75–91; Pandit, 'Medieval Kashmir Historiography', (unpublished paper), pp. 13–14.

[27] This had led to the breakdown of the earlier social order based on Brahmanical institutions, such as *agraharas*, and provided people with new economic opportunities. This in turn encouraged migration to towns and cities, and the emergence of new social classes such as artisans and craftsmen. Khanqahs became centres of community social and economic life for these classes as well as elites. Banihali (1978), pp. 133–6; Hangloo (2000), pp. 56–60, 80–1.

[28] Some of these texts (not discussed in this chapter) include *Chilchillat-ul Arifin* by Khwaja Ishaq Qari (c. 1574–5); *Rishinama* by Baba Daud Khaki (c. 1580–1); and *Hidayat-ul Mukhlisin* by Haidar Tulmuli (c. 1588–9). See Rafiqi (2003), pp. 317–19.

[29] For biographical information on Baba Daud Khaki, see Rather (1986), 1–9; Rafiqi (2003), pp. 28–9; Sufi, vol. II (1974), p. 457.

[30] Rafiqi (2003), pp. 29–33.

[31] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 245–6.

[32] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), p. 67.

[33] The intercourse between Sanskrit and Persian, which began in Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's court, continued well into the late sixteenth century. Zain ul-Abidin (r. 1420–70) was the first Sultan to declare Persian as the official court language, and by the late fifteenth century, Persian had become the elite literary language in Kashmir. At the same time, however, he also patronized Sanskrit poets and writers in his court and encouraged inter-linguistic exchanges. Indeed, it was Sultan Zain ul-Abidin who restarted the tradition of composing court chronicles in the Sanskrit language, deputing Pandit Jonaraja to continue Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, while also commissioning the translation of Kalhana's text into Persian and the rendition of Jami's *Yusuf-Zuleikha* into Sanskrit. The tradition of writing the histories of the successive reigns of the kings of Kashmir under the Sultans, beginning with Jonaraja, continued well into and past the Sultanate period into late-sixteenth-century Kashmir. Thus Sanskrit chronicles and Persian tazkiras and tarikhs were being composed in tandem in the latter half of sixteenth-century Kashmir. See Banihali (1978), p. 496; Slaje (2004), p. 7; Pushp, 'Introductory', in Khuihami, vol. IV (1961), p. 9; Obrock (2013), pp. 221–36.

[34] Pollock (2001a), p. 419 (12n).

[35] Pollock (2000), p. 607.

[36] There were brief spells of courtly patronage of Persian literature, mainly poetry, under Sultans Hussain Shah Chak (r. 1563–70), Ali Shah Chak (r. 1570–8), and Yusuf Shah Chak (r. 1578–9). Pushp, 'Introductory', in Khuihami, vol. IV (1961), pp. 9–10.

[37] On the centrality of ideas of space and spatiality to religion, see Corrigan, 'Spatiality and Religion', in Warf and Arias (2009), pp. 157–72.

[38] Sharma (2008), p. 124. See also Inden, 'Imperial Puranas', in Inden, Walters, and Ali (2000b), pp. 29–98. Inden argues that the Kashmiri Puranas functioned as both history (*itihasa*) and instruction (*sastra*), and were 'articulative' of the historical contexts in which they emerged. Inden, 'Imperial Puranas', pp. 55–65.

[39] For a discussion of the theme of travel in Indo-Muslim Sufi hagiographical literature, see Green (2003), pp. 493–509. On the importance of migration as a spatial concept to articulations of religious community, see Corrigan, 'Spatiality and Religion', in Warf and Arias (2009), pp. 162–4.

[40] K. Chatterjee (2009b), p. 92.

[41] Ibid., p. 98.

[42] Ronit Ricci's recent work on the Arabic cosmopolis provides a similar discussion of the significance of literature and literary networks to the processes of Islamization and conversions to Islam in South and Southeast Asia from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. According to her, 'Literature produced within local Muslim communities, and the literary networks that extended beyond the local … provide new insights into the history of Islam in these regions, the fluctuating balance between local and global elements privileged by particular Muslim authors and societies, and the roles played by literary transmission and translation in their histories'. See Ricci (2011), p. 4.

[43] Khaki, trans. Quraishi (2001), pp. 563–5.

[44] Ibid., p. 18.

[45] As Green notes, 'The saint was inseparable from his space, the text from its territory'. Green (2012), p. 20.

[46] The Nurbakhshiya sect was persecuted by the Timurid Sultan, Shah Rukh of Herat, when its founder, Muhammad Nurbakhsh, who claimed descent from the Hamadani-Kubrawi Sufi order, had declared himself the *mahdi* (messiah), thereby leading to clashes with a rival group in Khuttalan. The leader of the rival group also claimed descent from the same Sufi order, and had inherited the khanqah of their common preceptor, Ishaq Khuttalani. It is important to note that Khuttalani, a Kubrawi shaykh, had been a disciple of Sayyid Ali Hamadani—the saint who is popularly regarded as the founder of Islam in Kashmir through his activities in the court of Sultan Qutubuddin in the 1370s—and is said to have accompanied Hamadani to Kashmir. Although not executed by Sultan Shah Rukh in the wake of the disturbances, Nurbakhsh was exiled from Khuttalan and had to spend his life wandering between Central Asia, Iran, and Anatolia, finally settling in Suliqan, Iran, after the Sultan's death, where he died in 1464. After his death, the sect's influence waned in Central Asia, and its followers, foremost among them Iraqi,

sought new lands, such as Kashmir (and later Baltistan), to spread the sect's message. See Elias (2000a), pp. 401–2; for a more detailed history of the Nurbakhshiya sect, see Bashir (2003). It is no surprise that the author of *Taufat* refers to Shah Rukh as the *dajjal* (antichrist) of the times. See Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), p. 33.

[47] Kashmiri, trans. Jaan (2006), pp. 23–4; Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), p. 146.

[48] Kashmiri, trans. Jaan (2006), pp. 254–7.

[49] Kashmiri, trans. Jaan (2006), pp. 43–4.

[50] Ibid., pp. 14–15.

[51] Renard (2008), p. 48.

[52] Khaki, trans. Quraishi (2001), pp. 252–4.

[53] For Kashmir's origin legends in the Sanskrit tradition, see Bamzai, *Shiraza* 46, no. 1 (undated), pp. 118–28.

[54] This has to be understood in the context of pre-Islamic (and contemporary) Kashmiri religious beliefs that considered the springs that dotted the landscape as sacred. Each spring was associated with a resident water or snake deity, to whom a pilgrimage site on the banks of the spring or river was usually dedicated. These sites were thus significant both in the textual and popular traditions of Kashmir long before the advent of Islam. See Inden, 'Kashmir as Paradise on Earth', in Rao (2008), pp. 523–61.

[55] See Sharma (2008), pp. 123–45; Roy, 'The Making of a Mandala', in Pati, Sahu, and Venkatasubramanian (2003), pp. 52–66.

[56] Khaki, trans. Quraishi (2001), pp. 240–1.

[57] Elias (2000b), pp. 254–5.

[58] Khaki, trans. Quraishi (2001), p. 456.

[59] Bhatt, *Shiraza* 34, nos 6–7 (undated), pp. 17–35.

[60] Ibid., pp. 20–2.

[61] Inden, 'Kashmir as Paradise on Earth', in Rao (2008), p. 532.

[62] Bhatt, *Shiraza* 34, nos 6–7 (undated), p. 33.

[63] As Green points out, 'saintly power was itself a territorial entity'. Green (2012), p. 23.

[64] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 63–4.

[65] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 178–9.

[66] Ibid., pp. 77–8. See also Bashir (2003), pp. 206–7.

[67] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 78–9.

[68] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 113–14.

[69] For a detailed discussion of this rivalry, see Bashir (2003), pp. 209–13.

[70] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), p. 118.

[71] Ibid., pp. 118–19.

[72] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 126–7.

[73] Ibid., pp. 127–8.

[74] Ibid., p. 129.

[75] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 209–33.

[76] Foucault, trans. Miskowiec (1967).

[77] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), p. 249.

[78] Pollock (2000), p. 616.

[79] Ali (2013), p. 257. Ali notes the existence of these two kinds of narrative temporalities in the thirteenth- to fifteenth-century *prabandha* literature from western India.

[80] Green (2012), p. 13.

[81] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 1–54.

[82] Green (2012), p. 28.

[83] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 133–4.

[84] Ibid., p. 140.

[85] Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), p. 234.

[86] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), p. 28.

[87] Sayyid Ali, trans. Bhatt (1994), pp. 1–2.

[88] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), p. 31.

[89] Sayyid Ali, trans. Rafiqi (2011), p. 110.

[90] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), pp. 34–5.

[91] Ibid., pp. 42–3.

[92] Sayyid Ali, trans. Bhatt (1994), pp. 11–13.

[93] Sayyid Ali, trans. Rafiqi (2011), p. 121.

[94] Green (2004b), p. 436.

[95] Sayyid Ali, trans. Bhatt (1994), pp. 19–20.

[96] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), p. 58.

[97] Sayyid Ali, trans. Bhatt (1994), p. 20.

[98] Sayyid Ali, trans. Rafiqi (2011), pp. 153–4.

[99] Green (2004b), p. 432.

[100] As Blain Auer notes in his study of the historiography of the Delhi Sultanate, 'History is not merely a chronological record of events, but a selected sample of illustrative moments and exemplary individuals'. He further illustrates at length the intertwined nature of historiography and sacred biography, arguing that the narratives of the encounters between rulers and friends of God were critical to establishing the political legitimacy of the Delhi Sultanate. See Auer (2012), p. 43; see also Chapter 4.

[101] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), pp. 62–3.

[102] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), pp. 61–8.

[103] Ibid., p. 87.

[104] Almost all sixteenth-century tazkiras and tarikhs linked Nooruddin's spiritual genealogy, as well as that of his successors, to Central Asian Sufi mystics, particularly Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, thereby appropriating the Rishi order into the Islamic tradition. See Rafiqi (2003), pp. 169–88, for specific examples.

[105] Sayyid Ali, trans. Rafiqi (2011), p. 150.

[106] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), pp. 83–5.

[107] Ibid., p. 105.

[108] Ibid., pp. 80–1.

[109] Sayyid Ali, trans. Bhatt (1994), pp. 4–6. Indian Sufi literature from the thirteenth to the turn of the sixteenth centuries recounted many similar encounters between jogis and Sufi shaykhs. See Rafiqi (2003), p. 45; Digby (1970), pp. 1–35.

[110] Alam (2004), pp. 151–61.

[111] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), p. 102.

[112] For instance, see ibid., pp. 110–11.

[113] For the power of the bodies of Sufi saints in creating and maintaining Muslim space in early modern India, see Green (2012), p. 19.

[114] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), p. 113.

[115] Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), p. 44.

[116] Wani (1984), p. 11; Rafiqi (2003), p. 334; Hasan (1959), p. 7.

[117] Wani (1984), pp. 22–3.

[118] Wani (1984), p. 26.

[119] For instance, the metre of the verses that frequently intersperse the text resemble that of Firdausi's *Shahnama*, which was a popular epic in Kashmir (it had been translated into Sanskrit in Zain ul-Abidin's court in the late fifteenth century). See Pandit, 'Introduction', in Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), p. xxxi.

[120] Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), p. 1.

[121] Ibid., pp. 1–9.

[122] Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), p. 2.

[123] Ibid., pp. 16–23.

[124] Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), p. 16.

[125] Ibid., pp. 17–19.

[126] Ibid., pp. 21–2.

[127] Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), pp. 38–45.

[128] Ibid., p. 44.

[129] Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), pp. 64–6, 74.

[130] Ibid., p. 66.

[131] Ibid., p. 76.

[132] Ibid., pp. 107–51.

2

A LITERARY PARADISE

The *Tarikh* Tradition in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Kashmir

As we have seen, by the early seventeenth century, Kashmir had a well-established narrative tradition in Persian that had laid the foundation for a vernacular literary practice. A variety of texts written in the cosmopolitan language accommodated to literary tropes drawn from earlier Sanskrit traditions to define Kashmir as a specific place. Within this locative imagination, Kashmir was a blessed landscape created as such by an internal network of sacred sites that were connected through the activities of divine and semi-divine individuals. At the same time, Kashmir as sacred space was located within universal spiritual geographies that transcended its territorial confines and existed in heterogeneous temporalities beyond historical time. Through a discussion of the advent of Islam to Kashmir, the texts not only naturalized Islam on Kashmir's landscape, but they also linked it to the political narrative of the establishment of the Kashmiri Sultanate. In the process, they attempted to explain and negotiate the relationships among rival Sufi sects and groups of nobles vying for power within an increasingly divided Kashmiri polity.

The Mughal conquest of Kashmir introduced a semblance of political order, and novel literary elements entered Kashmiri narrative practice, giving rise to a well-defined *tarikh* tradition. This chapter suggests, however, that the tarikhs produced in this period in Kashmir cannot be easily subsumed under the Indo-Persian tarikh

tradition embodied by Mughal histories and historiographical concerns. Studying Kashmir's tarikhs on their own terms illustrates the internal regional diversity of the Indo-Persian tarikh tradition within South Asia. Persian historiographical production in Kashmir was profoundly and directly shaped by the preceding indigenous Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions and displayed local concerns and motivations regarding historical narration. Since the narrative of Kashmir's transition to Islam and its constitution as an Islamic space had been well established by Persian texts during a moment of political crisis and division, the restoration of the centre under Mughal rule allowed for a narrative turn towards asserting Kashmir's uniqueness, and hence distinctive position, within the Mughal Empire.

The centrality of the space of Kashmir (as opposed to the Mughal Empire) as the primary unit of analysis, and its definition as a place, territorial entity, polity, and region through a narration of its past rendered Kashmir's tarikhs distinct within the Indo-Persian historical tradition. This was achieved through the tarikhs' self-conscious engagement with and placement within an indigenous genealogy of historiographical practice. I suggest therefore that Kashmir's tarikh tradition unfolded at the intersection of two related engagements with the past—the past defined as literary/narrative tradition, or a set of stylistic or philosophic practices that had to be continued, and the past defined as history, or a chronological recounting of facts that took place in historical time.[1] The Sanskrit *Rajatarangini* corpus and the indigenous Persian historical and hagiographical traditions emerged, to varying degrees, as the locus of these twin engagements. While the Sanskrit corpus came to be regarded as a genre to be emulated even if individual authors diverged from its established practices, and as a source of facts about Kashmir's mythical and distant pasts, the Persian texts became a means to establish the narrative of the conversion of the land, people, and polity to Islam.

The ample intertextuality between the Sanskrit and Persian texts, and among Persian texts themselves, established a profound link within the tarikhs between the antecedents of the land and its people, and the genealogy of its narrative tradition. Written not just

by courtly elites, but also by traders, pirs, and Sufi scholars, the resultant texts were concerned not so much with laying down the prescriptions for courtly behaviour in an Indo-Persianate Mughal culture, as with negotiating the relationship between the Mughal Empire and Kashmir as both a political territory and an Islamic space. At the same time, they claimed the rights and privileges of certain actors over others on Kashmir's political stage.[2]

In one of the few studies of Kashmir's tarikhs, *Muarikhen Kashmir ki Tarikhen* (The Histories by Kashmir's Historians), Ghulam Rasool Bhatt analyses the texts from the perspective of how their authors described the Mughal conquest of Kashmir. His primary purpose appears to be to dismiss those texts as tendentious that pointed out that Kashmiris, particularly prominent Sufi figures, invited in, supported, or in any way helped Mughal forces in the late sixteenth century.[3] Rather than analysing the discussions of Mughal rule in Kashmir's tarikh tradition simply in terms of Kashmiri culpability (or lack thereof) during the Mughal conquest, this chapter examines the ways in which these texts cast a longer look at Kashmir's past in the context of the Mughal conquest, which led to Kashmir's inclusion into a larger empire centred in South Asia, and after Mughal decline, its incorporation into the Afghan Empire. Even as they drew on Mughal historiographical and political traditions, the texts asserted their autonomy from both by putting forward their own ideas about historical narration, as well as the relationship between political and spiritual authority. A continued dialogue in these narratives among local, regional, universal, and imperial cultures, and multiple genres, as well as history and memory (albeit in ways distinct from the narratives discussed in the earlier chapter), led to the constitution of Kashmir as a literary paradise—a space created by the narrative imagination where, in turn, the narrative imagination was nurtured and flourished.

The four texts I am primarily concerned with here are *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, completed by Haider Malik Chadurah between 1620 and 1621, during his tenure as governor of Kashmir under Emperor Jahangir; *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (Selections from History, 1710) by Narayan Koul 'Ajiz', *mir munshi* of the Mughal deputy governor Arif Khan; Khwaja Muhammad Azam Dyadmari's *Waqiat-i Kashmir*

(Events of Kashmir, 1746); and the versified *Bagh-i Sulaiman* (Garden of Solomon, 1778) by Saadullah Shahabadi. Dyadmari and Shahabadi were both tied to significant Sufi orders in Kashmir and did not have any courtly connections. Partly as a result of that, and partly because they were written in the mid to late eighteenth century, the latter texts engaged with tradition in somewhat different ways and displayed distinct concerns regarding the purpose of historical production.

Mughal Rule and Literary Culture in Kashmir

The Mughal period (1586–1758) occupies a transformative, yet liminal, space in the historiography on Kashmir. Although it is regarded as a period that ushered in major transformations onto Kashmir's socio-political, architectural, and intellectual landscapes, its treatment usually lies somewhere in the middle of the generically labelled 'Muslim rule in Kashmir'.[4] To an extent, the ambivalence towards Mughal rule in modern Kashmiri historiography has been influenced by the popular contemporary idea (which has also filtered into some scholarship), that the Mughals ushered in a period of foreign rule in Kashmir, with which the region continues to struggle.[5] However, Kashmiri historiography also recognizes that the Mughals followed a period of intense conflict and dissension that ended the Kashmiri Sultanate and transferred power to the Chaks, and were followed by the oppressions of the Afghan period (1758–1819). As a result, despite the description of the Mughals as outsiders, there is also a sense in Kashmiri historiography that Mughal rule rendered Kashmir to its rightful position as paradise on earth, both physically and metaphorically.

The advent of Mughal rule in Kashmir in 1586 ushered in a period of relative stability after more than a century of political tumult in the region. However, pockets of revolt by the Chaks continued well into Jahangir's reign, particularly in response to the anti-Nurbakhshiya policies of the early Mughal governors, and were finally curbed by the Mughal governor, Itiqad Khan, in 1622.[6] As a result of the continuing political crisis in the region in the late sixteenth century,

Akbar took immediate steps to incorporate the region fiscally and administratively into the Mughal Empire by restructuring its agrarian structure, expanding artisanal production, reorganizing the administration, and entering into matrimonial relations with the defeated nobility.[7] The five-member team deputed by Akbar in 1589 to formulate the revenue assessment for the southern and northern districts of Kashmir prepared a detailed report on the nature of the land, its classification as well as appropriation, and after a reassessment in 1597, set the state share of land revenue at one-third of the total produce.[8]

The reorganization of the land revenue machinery firmly drew the contours of Kashmir as a territorial entity that was part of the Mughal Empire. It also led to the emergence of a new class of officials such as *patwari*, *tehsildar*, *dewan*, and so on. Many of these newly created positions were occupied by locally dominant elements as per the choice of the Mughal *subahdar* (vice-regent of the emperor in Kashmir; governor), thus allowing the Mughal state to contain the conflicting interests amongst the region's nobility.[9] Akbar further attempted to reconcile the region's nobility by offering them cash rewards, *mansab*s (imperial ranks), and *jagir*s (land grants). Unless the nobles were seen as particularly dangerous, the land grants were located in Kashmir itself.[10]

Similarly, artisanal production, an important part of Kashmir's economy since the Sultanate period, was given strong encouragement by the Mughal state, even as trade between Kashmir and other parts of Mughal India increased during this period. Akbar's patronage of the Kashmiri shawl industry is a particularly well-known case, which allowed for increasing trade links among Kashmir, Turkistan, Lhasa, Khorasan, Hindustan, and Persia, as pashmina wool was brought into Kashmir to be manufactured into shawls, which were then consumed across the Indo-Persian world, particularly by the Mughal and Persian nobility. Jahangir had the Mughal road constructed as a means to ensure the security of the increasing traffic of goods and people between Kashmir and other parts of the Mughal Empire, which had the effect of making Kashmir more easily accessible and drawing it closer into

the Indian economy. The urban groups created as a result of these processes, which were now also dependent on Indian goods, alongside the nobility who had been incorporated into the new administration or tied to the Mughal state through matrimonial alliances, were fully invested in the continuation and success of Mughal rule in Kashmir.[11]

The Mughals were particularly drawn to the indigenous idea of Kashmir as sacred space—a paradise on earth—and set about transforming its landscape to fit this appellation, particularly through the building activities commissioned by Akbar, Jahangir, and Nur Jahan. By constructing 'gardens of delight' that mirrored the images of Quranic paradise across the length and breadth of the Valley, successive Mughal rulers were drawing on a complex intermingling of indigenous ideas of Kashmir as paradise, auspicious landscape, and blooming garden, as articulated in its Sanskrit and Persian texts. At the same time, however, there was a particularly imperial bent to these construction projects, which were to be seen as the implementation of divine authority through its instrument on earth—the Mughal emperor.[12] The idea of Kashmir as paradise was further institutionalized during Mughal rule due to Kashmir's natural beauty and salubrious climate, which made Kashmir into a leisure spot and retreat for Mughal rulers. This association between Mughal rule and Kashmir as paradise opening its arms to the Mughal emperor was already apparent in Akbar's first visit to Kashmir in 1589. The visit was eulogized by Akbar's poet laureate, Faizi, who was accompanying him, in a ninety-eight verse *qasida* (eulogy or purpose poem) about the beauties of Kashmir, which begins: 'A thousand caravans of desire are making a night attack on Kashmir / to throw open the banquet of her festivity (to the emperor)'.[13]

The significant impact of Mughal rule in Kashmir is particularly apparent in the realm of literary culture, which was in turn closely tied to the incorporation of its landscape into the Mughal imperial imagination. Literary figures of all kinds accompanied the Mughal emperors on their royal visits to Kashmir, where they held poetic symposia in which Kashmiri, Iranian, and Mughal poets exchanged ideas and recited *qasida*s and *masnavi*s in praise of Kashmir's beauty and the gardens and other buildings constructed by the

Mughal crown in Kashmir.[14] Many Mughal subahdars too patronized poetic assemblies through the seventeenth century, which allowed for the emergence of a descriptive Persian poetic literature in Kashmir by Kashmiri poets such as Qudsi, Kalim, Salim, and Ahsan, some of whom also produced ghazals on mystical subjects.[15]

The institutionalization of Persian as the court language and the language of political and literary culture under Mughal rule, as reflected in the formalization of Persian poetry in Kashmir,[16] finally brought about a decline in Sanskrit as the favoured cosmopolitan literary language of the elites.[17] The transactions between Sanskrit and Persian literary culture, however, as this chapter demonstrates, continued throughout this period.[18] As Kumkum Chatterjee has argued, 'Persian functioned as a mainstream attribute of Mughal imperial culture and served as an extremely important integrative mechanism throughout the empire and its provinces'. At the same time, Mughal cosmopolitanism embodied elements drawn from a variety of regional, religious, and linguistic traditions, interacting synergistically with Sanskrit cosmopolitanism to influence art, literature, and historical composition.[19]

Even as Kashmir's natural and built environment was being eulogized in Persian poetry, Mughal historiography, also in Persian, came to define the contours of the region's historical landscape. There is much recent writing on the growth of historiography, embodied in the tradition of the tarikh (political chronicle), under the Mughals. According to this scholarship, the Indo-Islamic tarikh tradition matured during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and was intimately tied to the courtly culture of political elites of the Mughal Empire. Since these texts were composed by individuals closely connected to the court, they were mainly concerned with providing the connected accounts of successive rulers and their governments.[20] Further as Ali Anooshahr points out, the Mughal tarikhs composed at the turn of the seventeenth century were no longer universal Islamic histories, but rather, 'treated the past of South Asia as a subject separate from the rest of the Islamic world'.[21] In part, this was a reflection of Akbar's broader endeavour of Indianizing the Mughal Empire, which was apparent in the

massive project of translation of Sanskrit works undertaken in his court, and which in turn informed the imperial ideology developing under his rule that came to fruition in Abul Fazl's monumental *Akbarnama* and the *Ain-i Akbari*.[22] This imperial ideology identified the empire in the person of the emperor, and placed pre-Mughal kings, in Anooshar's words, 'in a teleology of monarchy that reached its climax with the emperor who was presented as a kind of perfect man, a divine or semi-divine figure possessing esoteric knowledge that far surpassed any religious scholar, Sufi master, or even apocalyptic *mahdi*'.[23]

Kashmir, one of the few regions of the Indian subcontinent that possessed a connected court chronicling tradition in Sanskrit that stretched over several centuries, presented a perfect venue for the articulation of this ideology as well as the region's incorporation into the larger historical narrative of the Mughal Empire. At the outset of his discussion of Kashmir's past in the *Ain-i Akbari*, Abul Fazl noted:

> When the Imperial standards were for the first time borne aloft in this garden of perpetual spring, a book called *Raj Tarangini* written in the Sanskrit tongue containing an account of the princes of Kashmir during a period of some four thousand years, was presented to his Majesty. It had been the custom in that country for its rulers to employ certain learned men in writing its annals. His Majesty who was desirous of extending the bounds of knowledge appointed capable interpreters in its translation which in a short time was happily accomplished.[24]

By noting that *Rajatarangini*—which most likely included the entire connected corpus of narratives beginning with Kalhana's twelfth-century text and ending with Shuka's late sixteenth-century text that records Akbar's conquest of Kashmir—had been offered to the emperor on his first visit to Kashmir, Abul Fazl unmistakably presented Akbar as the culmination of several millennia of regional kings and the rightful ruler of Kashmir at the present time. At the same time, by pointing out that this history had been translated into Persian on Akbar's orders, which allowed Abul Fazl to use the translated text to pen his own narrative on Kashmir's past, he seamlessly drew Kashmir into the wider Mughal imperial narrative as articulated in the *Akbarnama*.

Equally importantly, the ideology of ideal kingship as detailed in *Rajatarangini* and its continuations reflected and reinforced the Mughal imperial ideology, in particular the idea of the institution of monarchy as divine, which formed the essence of Abul Fazl's text. The Sanskrit texts, much like Indo-Muslim tarikhs, were a self-conscious commemoration of the deeds of past kings, written by poets connected to the Kashmiri court for the explicit edification of rulers, and as such were meant to serve as a warning to present and future kings to act within the boundaries of morality. History, according to these narratives, similar to the case of medieval Persian historiography as noted by Julie Meisami, 'imparts its lessons through presenting recurrent patterns of events and of human conduct'.[25] Further, the narratives represented Kashmir, as Kumkum Roy points out in the case of Kalhana's text, 'as constituting the apex of the universe', with many of its rulers being 'portrayed as exercising universal sway'.[26]

Moreover, the rulers of Kashmir, particularly in the remote past, were presented as having divine powers, since they were part of Hara (Shiva) himself, while the realm they ruled (Kashmir) was itself a sacred space, identified as Shiva's consort, Parvati. Even the later Muslim rulers of Kashmir were drawn into this cosmography, as evident in Srivara's fifteenth-century history of the kings of Kashmir, *Zainatarangini*. While describing the battles among the various claimants to Kashmir's throne during the rule of the later Sultans, the text stated, 'Consider what is said in the *Purana*, that Kashmira is Parvati, and know that its king is born of a part of Shiva. Even if the king be wicked he should not be slighted by those who strive for good. Sovereignty is obtained in this country by religious penance, not by valour'.[27] Here Srivara echoes his illustrious predecessor, Kalhana, who wrote that Kashmir 'may be conquered by the force of spiritual merits, but not by forces of soldiers'.[28]

The Sanskrit chronicling tradition thus recognized the ruler of Kashmir as universal, and endowed with paramount sovereignty that superseded all other forms of authority, both temporal and spiritual. These ideas fit well within the framework of Mughal imperial ideology. At the same time, however, since the Mughals had

conquered Kashmir by military might and not spiritual merit, and were facing numerous rebellions at this time, the narration of the region's past by drawing on its indigenous tradition became an essential means of acquiring spiritual merit. This, in turn, established Mughal legitimacy to rule over the land.

Not surprisingly, then, and given Abul Fazl's deep interest in and study of Sanskrit texts in general, the brief account of Kashmir's past in the *Ain-i Akbari* is almost entirely drawn from the Persian translations of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and its continuations. As such, it is the first Persian text from outside Kashmir to begin the history of Kashmir with its founding legend and emergence from the lake Satisar (albeit in brief).[29] It then goes on to describe its rulers since the habitation of the land by Brahmans. Unlike the Sanskrit (or Persian) texts, it comments little on Kashmir's transition to Islam, other than to note, drawing on Jonaraja's *Rajatarangini*, that the Muslim, Shah Mir (the founder of the Sultanate in Kashmir), was descended from 'Arjun the Pandava'.[30] In addition, the account dismisses Sultan Sikandar, who was lauded by Kashmir's Persian historians as the propagator of Islam in Kashmir, as 'a rigid follower of religious tradition and a bigot',[31] very much along the lines of the Sanskrit chroniclers, and of course, Abul Fazl's own ideological proclivities.[32]

Abul Fazl lauds Sultan Zain ul-Abidin as a paragon of tolerance and patron of the arts and literature, and following from the Sanskrit histories, goes so far as to say that the Sultan had divine powers which allowed him to divest himself of corporeal form and gave him the ability to foretell the future. In this capacity, according to Abul Fazl, 'he foretold that under the dynasty of the Chaks, the sovereignty of Kashmir would be transferred from that family to the monarchs of Hindustan, which prediction after a period of years was accomplished'.[33] While the Sanskrit histories of Zain ul-Abidin's reign, and later Persian texts such as *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, did describe him as semi-divine, it is noteworthy that they did not include any instance in which he foretold the advent of Mughal rule in Kashmir. So while drawing to an extent on Sanskrit chronicles, Abul Fazl's own ideas about Akbar's divinity were undoubtedly at

play in his description of the famous and beloved Kashmiri Sultan. These were realized in directly connecting the two monarchs by endowing Zain ul-Abidin with powers of foresight to validate Akbar's conquest of the region.

The more general description of the *sarkar* (division) of Kashmir in the *Ain-i Akbari*, of which the foregoing historical account forms a part, is worth examining in some detail here, since subsequent Persian historical narratives written in Kashmir were based on it to an extent. The *Ain-i Akbari*'s section on the Kashmir sarkar is subdivided into three sub-sections—the first is a general discussion of Kashmir's geographical location and attributes, including its prominent sacred sites; the second is a statistical account of its *parganah*s (districts) and the revenue yielded from each; and the third is the historical account discussed above, which includes a chronological table of successive sovereigns of the region, as well as their dates of rule. The first section places the Kashmir sarkar as part of the *subah* (province) of Kabul, which was situated in the third and fourth climes, and also comprised Pakhli, Bhimbar, Swat, Bajaur, Qandahar, and Zabulistan.[34] In this instance, and in the second section, Kashmir is defined in purely territorial terms with well-defined boundaries, internal divisions based on revenue yields, and a coherent history.

The first section, however, then goes on to describe Kashmir in more discursive terms, as 'a garden of perpetual spring surrounding a citadel terraced to the skies, and deservedly appropriate to be either the delight of the worldling or the retired abode of the recluse'.[35] Invoking the descriptions of the land and its attributes in its Sanskrit and Persian traditions, Abul Fazl thus drew a picture of Kashmir as simultaneously a worldly and spiritual paradise, dotted with sweet streams, enchanting flowers, juicy fruits, and pilgrimage sites. As the editor and translator of the *Ain-i Akbari* noted, Abul Fazl 'devoted more space to the description of the places of note in Kashmir than in any other subah, because he looked upon it as a holy land full of sacred places, hermits' retreats and quiet natural scenes'.[36] After the general description of its invigorating climate, languages, religious traditions, and the capital city, Srinagar, the section describes in detail the wondrous places and springs of the

Valley, alongside the popular traditions attached to each. So for instance, Abul Fazl describes the existence of a pool near the town of Brang, which remained dry during eleven months, but during the divine month of April, two springs bubbled forth from it, sometimes only for a second, and at other times for three hours. In another description, a spring remained dry until propitiatory offerings of a sheep or goat were made to it, leading to the bubbling forth of water that irrigated five villages.[37]

Abul Fazl thus defined Kashmir in both territorial and symbolic terms, much as the indigenous Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions. There are, however, significant variations between the two. Sanskrit texts such as Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, for instance, begin with the idea of Kashmir as a beautiful place with unique attributes that rendered it sacred, and present its very creation as an act of divine intervention, before launching into a discussion of its successive rulers. The discussion of the sacred and awe-inspiring sites of the Valley is woven into this chronological narrative, since these sites were seen as being created by historical actors through their actions, and were thus considered sites on which the historical narrative itself was played out. In a sense, the Persian narratives discussed in the last chapter also drew Kashmir's sacred attributes, in particular its many springs, into the larger narrative of its sacred past, with Sufi divines acting on and appropriating them for Islam. Abul Fazl, on the other hand, disentangled these sites from the narrative, discussing them instead as a list of wonders about the land of Kashmir in a separate section from its historical narrative.

In this, the *Ain-i Akbari* seemed to be following the lead of Mirza Haider Dughlat's earlier Persian history, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, a portion of which was devoted to Kashmir, and was written by him in Kashmir between 1544 and 1545, while acting as the kingdom's regent.[38] Dughlat describes Kashmir as a 'beautiful country', and after a discussion of its geographical expanse and location, pleasant climate, sweet fruits, and beautiful buildings, among its other attributes, he proceeds to describe its 'wonders'. These included, other than its idol temples, with which Dughlat seemed very impressed, its various springs, lakes, and other water bodies, each of which Dughlat gives a location for, as well as the popular

traditions attached to the sites.[39] With regard to geographical facts about Kashmir's location and size, Dughlat includes a lengthy quote from Sharaf ud-Din Yazdi's *Zafarnama*, the renowned Timurid historical narrative. However, he notes that since Yazdi himself had never visited Kashmir, the facts 'were not quite consistent with reality'.[40]

This is followed by a brief discussion of its history, which is limited to Kashmir's recent conversion to Islam and its successive Muslim Sultans, and a discussion of Kashmir's religious sects.[41] This general format is followed by the *Ain-i Akbari* in its segment on the sarkar of Kashmir, particularly in its distilling of the wonders of the region from the historical narrative by presenting them in a separate section. Significantly, however, the *Ain-i Akbari*'s content, especially of the historical narrative of Kashmir, is decidedly different, since it begins Kashmir's history with the origin legend of the land, rather than the advent of Islam into the region.

The foregoing discussion illustrates that Mughal literary interactions with Kashmir's Sanskrit narrative tradition legitimized it as the prime source for recording the region's historical past. They did so, however, with the principal purpose of politically validating the Mughal conquest of the region by presenting Akbar as the culmination of ideal kingship in Kashmir. The *Ain-i Akbari*'s description of Kashmir's land and past, drawing as it did on multiple strands within the textual and popular traditions of Kashmir, represented the larger incorporation of Kashmir into the Mughal landscape of power. At the same time, however, the *Ain-i Akbari* cemented the image of Kashmir as an especially blessed sacred space, and as the home of a rich, interconnected historical tradition, both ideas that subsequent Persian tarikhs from Kashmir would emphasize and use to claim a special place for Kashmir within the Mughal Empire. While drawing to a certain extent on the *Ain-i Akbari*, which served as a significant literary model for successive generations of writers in Persian, Kashmir's tarikhs narrated Kashmir's past in ways different than the *Ain-i Akbari*, both in terms of content and motivation. In particular, their engagement with the *Rajatarangini* narratives, as well as the indigenous Persian narrative

tradition, went much beyond a mere recognition of these texts as sources for establishing a record of Kashmir's past.

The Authors and Their Creations

Tarikhs in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Kashmir were composed by individuals from a variety of social groups—from courtly elites to individuals closely linked to shrines—and illustrate the continuities and ruptures within the tradition of historical composition in Kashmir. Moreover, the convergences and divergences amongst the texts' motivations and concerns about writing history not only help us understand the changing relationship between Kashmir and the Mughal state during the century and a half of Mughal rule in Kashmir, but also shed light on the transformation of the discursive and territorial idea of Kashmir itself in this period. In both cases, the texts discussed here played a critical role in giving voice to, while at the same time shaping, the nature of these transformations.

Haider Malik Chadurah, the author of the earliest tarikh (1620–1) under discussion in this chapter, belonged to the Chadurah (or Raina) clan of Kashmiri nobles, one of four noble clans (the others being Magareys, Dars, and Chaks) that had played a pivotal role in late-fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Kashmiri politics. He was one of the early and very few indigenous Kashmiri governors appointed by the emperors during the entire period of Mughal rule in Kashmir. Jahangir bestowed this position on him at the behest of a group of Kashmiri supplicants weary of the maladministration of previous Mughal governors.[42] It is no surprise that Haider Malik was chosen for this position, since he had earlier been granted the title of Chagatai, as well as several jagirs by Jahangir for his services in suppressing Sher Afghan's rebellion in Burdwan.[43] The transformation of Haider Malik's fortunes during Kashmir's transition to Mughal rule embodies, in some ways, the impact of larger socio-economic alterations ushered in by Mughal rule in Kashmir, particularly for the Kashmiri nobility.

Haider Malik appears to have been a member of a group of nobles persecuted by the first Mughal subahdar in Kashmir (Qasim

Khan Mir Bahr), since he may have played a role in the continuing Chak rebellions, and was also most likely a follower of the Nurbakhshiya sect. By his own admission, he served Yusuf Khan Chak, who, along with a number of other Kashmiri nobles, eventually went to Akbar's court to seek protection from these persecutions. Akbar granted Yusuf Khan a mansab of one thousand, but seeing his continued presence in Kashmir as a threat, bestowed on him jagirs in the parganahs of Bukyana and Bumah in the Doab region. Yusuf Khan appointed Haider Malik the *faujdar* (commander) of these two parganas. As commander, Haider Malik crushed the rebellion led by the zamindar Raja Damer, receiving nine arrows on his body during the battles, a feat for which Akbar invited him to an audience. However, while Haider Malik was travelling towards the court, Akbar expired and Jahangir succeeded to the throne.[44]

It was under Jahangir that Haider Malik participated in a campaign to crush Sher Afghan, whose jagir in Burdwan Yusuf Khan inherited. During this campaign, despite his grave injuries, he provided safe haven to Sher Afghan's wife, Mehr un-Nissa (later Empress Nur Jahan), for forty days in his own home, an act for which Jahangir awarded him the titles of Chagatai and Rais ul-Mulk, the governorship of Kashmir, as well as jagirs in Kashmir.[45] Returning thus to his homeland, it is no surprise that Haider Malik—besides undertaking the reconstruction of the Jama Masjid (which had been burned down in a fire) and the Nurbakhshiya shrine of Shamsuddin Iraqi (which had been destroyed during the battles and rebellions at the end of the sixteenth century)[46]—composed a history of his ancestors and the land to which they belonged. Equally unsurprising is Haider Malik's narration of his close ties to the Mughal court in the text. Nevertheless, the narrative charts an independent course that asserts Kashmir's individuality by placing it simultaneously within a local and much wider, more universal, Islamic historical imagination.

Similarly, Narayan Koul 'Ajiz', the author of *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (1710), was firmly a part of Mughal courtly culture when he composed his tarikh, interestingly once again during the deputy governorship of an indigenous Kashmiri. Narayan Koul was most likely born in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and soon

after completing his education began to work for the Mughal subahdars of Kashmir. Under Arif Khan, *naib-subahdar* of Kashmir, he attained the position of mir munshi.[47] However, the political context of Mughal rule was far different in the early eighteenth century than in the early seventeenth century (when Haider Malik was governor), with the Mughal authority already beginning its slide into decline.

There is much recent scholarship on the emergence and the nature of the scribal classes within the eighteenth-century Mughal world, such as the *munshi*s of northern India or the *karanam*s of southern India, and their simultaneous participation in Persian and vernacular literary worlds.[48] According to Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, these scribes and intellectuals—many of them Hindus of the *khattri* or *kayastha* castes—emerged in the context of the 'socio-linguistic complex' of Persian entrenched by the Mughal Empire. And by the late seventeenth century, they 'were feeling sufficiently confident of their position to propose changes in received models of history-writing and new framings for old histories'.[49] Kumkum Chatterjee further locates the production of Persian tarikhs in the eighteenth-century Mughal successor state of Murshidabad (Bengal) by scribal and courtly elites within the broader context of Mughal hegemony.[50]

To an extent, similar processes can be identified in the case of eighteenth-century Kashmir, where the Mughal court had become a distant presence as Mughal governors, assisted increasingly by local deputies and their assistants, assumed de facto control of the administration of Kashmir. Scribal classes, in particular *karkun*s (Kashmiri Pandit scribes and bureaucrats), had emerged as important office holders within the late Mughal, followed by the Afghan, administrations. Well-versed in Persian courtly culture, karkuns were also intimately tied to the Sanskrit and vernacular literary traditions of Kashmir. While located within Mughal political culture, the decline of the Mughal Empire itself did not loom large in texts such as *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, the first Persian history penned by a karkun. These texts were not as concerned as similar scribal texts elsewhere in the subcontinent with preserving the

Mughal cultural and political legacy. Rather, they were more interested in envisioning Kashmir as a distinct region (not merely a place or even a political entity) and giving voice to a sense of belonging to that region.

The authors of the other two texts we are concerned with here, written in the mid and late eighteenth century, were not directly connected to the court, but their productions can be squarely located within this context, particularly that of the decline of Mughal rule and the consequent crisis in Kashmir's polity. Muhammad Azam Dyadmari (1691–1765), author of *Waqiat-i Kashmir* (1746), was born into a family of prominent shawl traders in the locality of Dyadmar in Srinagar during Aurangzeb's rule. His father, Mulla Khairuddin, was a scholar as well as a shawl trader, who had gained admittance into Aurangzeb's court. His honest dealings with the royal family led the emperor to grant him the title of Khair-ul-Zaman Khan and a few Kashmiri villages as jagir.[51] Dyadmari was given a traditional education at home by his father before attending a *madrasa* for three years, where he studied under a distinguished Kashmiri scholar of Persian, Mulla Abul Hasan of Kawdara. After completing his secular education, he joined the Sufi order of Shaykh Muhammad Murad Teng Kashmiri, from whom he gained spiritual knowledge for twelve years. He also spent several years travelling within Kashmir to study with prominent Sufi masters of the time, and he came to be recognized as a significant scholar and saint of his period.[52]

Dyadmari began composing Persian verse at an early age and wrote a treatise in praise of his mentor, *Risala-i Faiz Murad*, as well as a number of other Sufi treatises, such as *Kawayad-i Mashayakh* (Rules of the Shaykhs) and *Ashjar-ul Khuld* (Orchards of Paradise).[53] Besides these texts, he translated Arabic classics into Persian, such as works by Sheikh Abdul Qadir of Gilan and other Sufi treatises.[54] *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, Dyadmari's only historical text, which he wrote over the course of ten years when Kashmir was in the grips of a profound political crisis, was, by his own admission, also meant to serve as a *tazkira* of the *awliya* (friends of God) of Kashmir.[55]

Waqiat-i Kashmir has had an interesting trajectory through the centuries after its composition. It occupies a special place within Kashmiri historiography, and this is evident from the fact that almost all subsequent historical narratives composed in Kashmir refer to this text. And besides Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, it is perhaps the most cited narrative in historical writing on Kashmir all the way into the twentieth century.[56] Moreover, it was the only Persian history from Kashmir to have a wider circulation in colonial India, since it was translated into Urdu by Munshi Ashraf Ali at the behest of Aloys Sprenger, the then principal of Delhi College, and published by the Delhi College in 1846.[57] The original Persian text was published by Muhammadi Lahore publishers in 1885 and once again by Ghulam Muhammad Noor Muhammad publishers, Srinagar, in 1936.[58] It is noteworthy that the dates for the republication of the narrative coincide with major events and movements in the history of Kashmir: the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was founded in 1846; Kashmiris had begun to voice their disapproval of the Dogra state by the mid-1880s; and in 1936, the Kashmiri nationalist movement was at its height. This implies that the text was appropriated as a repository of the collective aspirations of the people of Kashmir.

It is clear that, much like Dyadmari, Saadullah Shahabadi, author of *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, was in no way connected to the court or the administration, but was more likely to have been attached to a Sufi order while composing the text. The self-consciousness of this versified text is evident from the fact that at one point, the author interjects his own self into the narrative, describing his antecedents, as well as his educational training and spiritual transformation at length. This part of this eclectic text reads like a bildungsroman, as Shahabadi details his education in the Quran, grammar, and logic, and his gradual turn towards Persian literature as he read the writings of poets of his age and began to compose poetry at a young age. He eventually turned towards the spiritual path and joined a Sufi order, which caused friction with his father, who told his son that he had chosen a journey with no end. Eventually, his father gave him permission and he immersed himself in the spiritual life, a

detailed account of which is recorded in the text.[59] In a sense, the author's spiritual coming of age is equated in the text with Kashmir's coming of age as a distinct *mulk*, imbued with the blessings of Sufis and mystics of successive ages.[60] Shahabadi's emphasis on Kashmir as uniquely blessed is especially poignant given its stark contrast with the text's actual descriptions of the wretched state of the land and its people during Afghan rule.

Other than the versified history, Shahabadi also wrote several spiritual treatises, including *Maghazi-ul Nabi* (Campaigns of the Prophet) and *Tafsir-i Quran-i Majid* (Commentary on the Quran).[61] For both Dyadmari and Shahabadi, their historical compositions were prescriptions for proper governance at a time when the balance between the temporal and the spiritual appeared to be askew. They were also meant to stand in for Kashmir itself, as well as, to an extent, its people, in the context of Kashmir's transition from Mughal to Afghan rule.

Claiming and Redefining the Past as Tradition

During the height of Mughal rule in the seventeenth century, as well as during its twilight in the mid-eighteenth, Kashmir's Persian historiographical tradition asserted its autonomy in narrating Kashmir's past through the formulation of its own set of engagements with the indigenous Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions. One of the important ways in which the tarikh narratives asserted their legitimacy, as well as their historicity, was by insisting on identifying the corpus of *Rajatarangini* texts as defining an indigenous Kashmiri literary space and narrative tradition. Equally significantly, they saw themselves as participating in and continuing this tradition. Thus the *Rajatarangini* genre was presented as a model for narrating Kashmir's past, and even if you diverted from this model, it had to be accorded the status of originary narration. These texts thus drew authority not from their proximity to particular saints and their teachings (as was the case with the texts discussed in the earlier chapter), but rather from their location within a longer historiographical tradition.

Sudipta Kaviraj argues that temporality was 'fuzzy and approximate' within the conception of the past as literary tradition, thereby allowing texts to be placed 'in a common horizon of literary contemporaneity, or better, atemporality'.[62] The tarikhs are rarely concerned with the dates of composition of the *Rajatarangini* narratives, and they do not indicate which precise *Rajatarangini* narrative they are referring to. Consequently, they are also not usually concerned with authorship.[63] What was most important to them was that they were successors of this narrative tradition and were part of the larger repertoire of texts that could be 'endlessly emulated'.[64] Significantly, however, for the authors of the later tarikhs, the *Rajatarangini* corpus came to embody a specifically historical genre that needed to be continued, while at the same time being transformed and moulded to fit the needs of historical composition in the present.[65]

As a result, at the very outset, all Persian tarikhs from Kashmir pay obeisance to the Sanskrit narratives as they proceed to recount the origin story of the emergence of Kashmir through divine intervention as related in these texts, at times with significant alterations and additions. This, besides legitimizing the tarikhs, lent them a narrative form and meaning, which was based on creating an intimate link between the origins of the land and its narrative tradition. The *Rajatarangini* genre thus came to encapsulate this link, and the concept of the past as tradition which was so critical to defining the idea of Kashmir itself within Kashmir's Persian historical tradition. While the *Rajatarangini* narratives provided the tarikhs with a concrete literary genealogy as well as the lineage of the land, earlier Persian texts such as those discussed in Chapter 1, became essential to establishing the spiritual and political narrative of Kashmir's past. In terms of discussing the origins of Kashmir as well as its narrative tradition, then, the authors of the tarikhs were unconcerned with precise dates, since both existed beyond linear temporality.

Tarikh-i Haider Malik was especially concerned with origins and genealogies—literary, familial, and spiritual. As the author writes in a couplet at the beginning of the text, 'Pure origin is the basis of

greatness and good fortune; / Base origin is not deserving of scepter and crown'.[66] In contrast to the author's anonymity in *Baharistan-i Shahi* and its distinctly elegiac tone in the latter half, *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* proudly proclaims the name of its author and is imbued with hopefulness, as well as a keen sense of purpose in narrating Kashmir's past. For Haider Malik, the composition of the history was in part about locating his familial genealogy within the historical genealogies of the kings of Kashmir to prove his worthiness for the position of Mughal governor.[67] Haider Malik very specifically notes his name and the antecedents of his family, as well as his family's relationship to the prior rulers of Kashmir, thereby tying his genealogy to the development of Kashmir itself as a polity. This was a means for him to prove not just his own loyalty to the Mughal crown, but also the loyalty of certain sections of the Kashmiri nobility that had not so long ago been engaged in rebellion against the Mughals in Kashmir. Significantly, however, while the narrative embedded his own family's past in the longer narrative of Kashmir's history, it played out this history not on the canvas of Mughal imperial history, but rather on the much larger canvas of Islamic history.

The author thus established his own genealogy, and the text's as well by presenting it as the continuation of Kashmir's long court chronicling tradition, according *Rajatarangini* with the status of literary ancestor. Haider Malik notes that he was deputed for this task by Jahangir himself, who commissioned a translation of *Rajatarangini* (written 'by the wise man of Kashmir') by Muhammad Hussain. The emperor then asked Haider Malik to utilize this translation to investigate the details about his own family's history in Kashmir, while also recording the details about the region's past rulers and nobles, 'so that the accounts of their lives may not be obliterated from the pages of time and the traces of the excellent pages may not be forgotten from the celestial mind'.[68]

The conscious incorporation of earlier indigenous Sanskrit and Persian traditions is apparent in the text's description of the origins of Kashmir. Just as it was for the author of *Baharistan*, for Haider Malik too the narrative of Kashmir's past began with its very inception as a habitable land, not the origin of Islam on its

landscape. Unlike *Baharistan*, however, which presents the origin story in abbreviated form, *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* describes multiple traditions related to Kashmir's origin in great detail at the outset of the text. The narration begins with the origin story of Kashmir detailed in Sanskrit texts and oral traditions, with its own variations, in which Kashmir was the lake known as Satisar, named after Mahadev's (Shiva's) wife, Parvati, and in which lived a demon called Jaladev. The sage Kashyap (Brahma's son), on seeing the destruction caused by this demon, called on Mahadev to destroy him. Mahadev took pity on Kashyap and entrusted the task of slaying the demon to Vishnu, who fought the demon unsuccessfully for a thousand years, since Jaladev was invincible in his own element. Ultimately, Vishnu went to the vicinity of Baramulla, where he lifted the mountain that was blocking the water from escaping, thus allowing the lake to be drained, causing Jaladev to be slain, and enabling the land of Kashmir—'the mountain of Kashyap'—to emerge. Kashyap then brought Brahmans from Hindustan to populate and settle the land.[69]

However, this is not where the text's discussion of Kashmir's origin ends. Haider Malik goes on to state:

> The authors of the history of Islam have also recorded various statements on this question. What is however explicit is that when the prophet Solomon, may peace be upon him, landed in this land by the order of God, the Glorious, one leg of his blessed throne rested on the top of the mountain now known as Koh-i Sulaiman. At this time, except the mountain ranges all the low-lying land was submerged under water. Since the prophet found the climate of that place extremely pleasing, he assigned the task of removing the water (from the lake) to two *jinn*s, one called Kashf and the other Mir. So they carried out the order of the prophet Solomon, may peace be upon him, and cleared this land of water. Thus, it was named Kashf-Mir and because of the efforts of the two persons, it became habitable. The name then changed into Kashmir as a result of its great usage. Then, at the orders of the prophet, people of the surrounding regions which are named after this land, migrated and settled down here. They took to agriculture until they felt the need of having just kings as the divine verse demands.[70]

In recounting this story, of course, Haider Malik was drawing on the Persian narrative tradition discussed in the previous chapter, in which the land of Kashmir had been described and claimed as an

Islamic landscape, or Bagh-i Sulaiman, cleared and settled by armies of jinns for the Prophet Solomon, and later the Sufi mystics. The juxtaposition and comfortable co-existence of these origin stories in this narrative reflects the entwining of the genealogies of the land both with and within the genealogies of its narrative traditions.

Muntakhab al-Tawarikh, written by the mir munshi Narayan Koul close to a century after Haider Malik's text, is similar to *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* in a number of ways, particularly in terms of establishing its literary genealogy and linking it to Kashmir's origins and that of its historical tradition. At the same time, however, Narayan Koul appears to be more aware of authorship of the texts he cites, thereby endowing them with a more historical quality. He writes at the beginning of the text that the elders of the community continuously requested him to write a history of Kashmir in the Persian language. However, he set to the task only after being requested to do so by the naib-subahdar, Arif Khan, who, Narayan Koul notes, was himself a Kashmiri, and he (Koul) completed the task, in *Jannat-i Kashmir*, in four years.[71]

It is interesting that the Kashmiri naib-subahdar chose this moment to commission his munshi to write a Persian history of Kashmir, a task for which, moreover, much like the earlier Mughal emperors, he had all the ancient Sanskrit histories of Kashmir collected and presented to the munshi.[72] In some ways, then, this can be seen as an attempt by the Kashmiri deputy governor to lay indigenous claim to Kashmir through the tradition of recording Kashmir's past. Narayan Koul's text was not just an heir to the Sanskrit court chronicling tradition, but it was also significant for claiming descent from Kashmir's earlier Persian tarikhs. In particular, Narayan Koul noted that before him, Haider Malik had translated the ancient Sanskrit histories of Kashmir into Persian, but this history was no longer liked by people of the contemporary era (perhaps because of its length and ornamental literary style), prompting Arif Khan to commission the present text.[73]

The text follows the basic parameters laid out by Haider Malik's text, while also drawing on the structure of Mughal texts such as the

Ain-i Akbari, and the ideologies presented in them. That Narayan Koul was writing in part as a member of the Mughal munshi class is apparent in the unusually long *hamd* (praise of God) at its commencement for a Persian tarikh from Kashmir, which is followed by an equally long tribute to the 'just and peaceful' rule of the contemporary Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah, including a lengthy qasida in his praise.[74] In this case, then, the text braided together indigenous and Indo-Persian literary and political styles, drawing as it did from the *Rajatarangini* narratives and *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, as well as the *Akbarnama*, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, and the *Shahnama*, among many others. According to Narayan Koul:

> I studied *Tarikh-i Kalhan Pandit* and also the other histories that came after it, and decided to commence this history with the same events that Kalhan Pandit's history begins with. Then I selected portions from each of these histories, removed their faults, and summarized them. Even though I have written about the past in brief, I have not missed any details.… I took up this task because earlier histories have recorded the past at great length and I wanted readers to more easily gain knowledge of Kashmir's past in a short period of time. Despite its brevity, however, this text is a complete history of Kashmir.[75]

The text then proceeds to recount the political history of Kashmir with the story of its emergence from the lake known as Satisar, events that, notes Narayan Koul, were recorded by all earlier histories.[76] The story is given in detail and resembles *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*; however, there is no mention of Kashmir as Bagh-i Sulaiman and its settlement by Prophet Solomon's jinns.

Both *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* and *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* engaged with the past as literary tradition by claiming the Sanskrit corpus of literary-historical composition as their model and drawing on tropes from indigenous Persian and Indo-Persian, as well as Islamic narratives, as their authors presented themselves as continuations of the indigenous tradition of court chroniclers. Within this idea of the past as literary tradition, temporality was immaterial because it was not so much historical events that mattered as did originary moments and genealogies. This allowed the tarikhs to re-centre Kashmir as the subject of historical narration by tying its origin to that of its narrative tradition. Kashmir emerged as the home of an

interconnected tradition of historical composition that lay beyond linear temporality and recorded and validated its nature as a sacred space. Within this tradition, the land was as much Solomon's garden as it was a holy ground for the Hindu sages.

The later eighteenth-century texts, while continuing to recognize the long tradition of historical composition in Kashmir, diverged significantly from the earlier texts in their engagement with the past as literary tradition. Although to an extent literary tradition continued to exist in a realm beyond historical time, now it was also constituted by specific texts that had been composed by individuals at different historical moments for particular reasons. Thus for *Waqiat-i Kashmir* and *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, the Persian narratives such as *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* now formed part of the historical tradition alongside the earlier Sanskrit texts. Moreover, a critical means through which they engaged with the corpus of Sanskrit and Persian texts that preceded them was to evaluate their historical value based on the motivations of their authors for historical composition. This was a means for the texts to argue not only for their own distinctiveness within the tradition, but also for a redefinition of the tradition itself.

At the very outset of *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, in its preface, the reader is struck by the author's self-conscious recognition of the historian's craft and the placement of his text within Kashmir's historical tradition, from which at the same time he clearly distinguishes himself. Immediately after the hamd, which includes the praises of Allah, his prophet, his companions and relatives, as well as 'Kashmir benazir' (peerless Kashmir), the text goes on to discuss the shortcomings of earlier historical narratives. According to Dyadmari, the most significant limitation of these texts was that they were composed by individuals closely attached to royal courts who had ignored the most critical, and hence legitimate, subjects of history—Sufi mystics and their role in shaping the land of Kashmir:

> Since ancient times, the history of Kashmir from one era to another, entitled *Rajatarang*, was composed by Hindu historians, who received a pension from rulers in return. When these pensions were discontinued due to political unrest, historical composition ceased altogether until later Muslim historians wrote continuations of these histories. The authors of Sanskrit and Persian chronicles, such as Haider Malik Chadurah, recorded historical events selectively, writing in

praise of kings and their ancestors. They ignored the lives of spiritual personages, such as Sufi mystics and the friends of God.[77]

Thus for Dyadmari, the fact that earlier texts were written by court historians meant that they recorded historical events selectively. More importantly, they focused on the political narrative of Kashmir's past, ignoring the spiritual in the process. Furthermore, according to him, since several other events had also taken place since their composition, he thought that it would be a good idea to pen a few pages that not only updated earlier histories, but also discussed the Sufi mystics and religious personages, as well as the poets and writers (of whom there was no mention in the pages of earlier histories), of every era.[78] 'Just because earlier historians did not focus on these individuals and I am interested in doing so', argues Dyadmari, 'does not necessarily render this focus against the principles of history writing'.[79] The resultant text, he notes, would serve as a memorial for those seeking to research past events and personages as well as learn from them.[80] Much like in the case of earlier *tazkiras*, the purpose of history writing, reading, and listening in this case was meant to be morally transformative.

In his discussion of Kashmir's political past, Dyadmari further distinguished himself from earlier narratives, in this case Sanskrit narratives, by claiming an authorial distance from exaggeration. Unlike earlier Persian narratives such as *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, *Waqiat-i Kashmir*'s discussion of Kashmir's early past is very brief. Dyadmari notes at the outset of this discussion that since these kings ruled in the distant past, he was interested merely in recording the dates of each ruler's reign rather than the embellished descriptions of their reigns found in Hindu histories.[81] Indeed, Dyadmari's description of Sultan Sikandar's rule not only hails the sultan's policies to strengthen Islam in Kashmir, but specifically lists one of his main achievements as the destruction of the books of Hindus, which included texts on idol worship, astrology, and histories that exaggerated the powers of the Hindu rajas.[82]

By distinguishing himself from earlier court historians, Dyadmari positioned himself as independent of the court and thus as a

historian of Kashmir—the mulk—the spiritual and political pasts of which had to be narrated in tandem. In the process, he also de-centred the importance of the royalty of the author's lineage and re-focused on the genealogies of the Sufi mystics of Kashmir. Moreover, he asserted that a historian could attribute miraculous powers only to Sufi mystics, not rulers. A history of Kashmir, after all, was incomplete if it did not memorialize the actions of Sufi mystics in transforming it into an Islamic space. Although Dyadmari presented himself as introducing entirely new elements into the indigenous tradition of historical composition, he was, in fact, very much drawing on the tropes and themes of earlier narratives. Nonetheless, *Waqiat-i Kashmir* did, far more self-consciously than earlier narratives, draw attention to the central concerns of the historical project itself: What was the main subject of history and for whom was a historical narrative composed?

Shahabadi's versified *Bagh-i Sulaiman* does not specifically engage with literary tradition at the outset, although it is unambiguous about its purpose in narrating the past, which I will turn to in a following section. While Shahabadi utilizes a range of Sanskrit and Persian narratives, as well as several histories of Islam in Arabic, it is clear that he saw himself as writing in the tradition of Firdausi's *Shahnama*, in the specific context of Kashmir. The Kashmiri *Shahnama* had been commissioned by the Afghan governor, Sukh Jeewan Mal (r. 1753–62), in the 1750s, a task for which he deputed seven poets, but the text remained incomplete due to his untimely death. Only some parts of two sections of the *Shahnama*, by Abdul Wahab 'Shaiq' and Mulla Muhammad 'Taufiq' (who was also Sukh Jeewan's poet laureate), survive. The former is entitled *Riaz-ul Islam* (Meadows of Islam) and outlines the history of Kashmir from the advent of Islam to Yusuf Shah Chak's reign. The latter, entitled *Ahval-i Mulk-i Kashmir* (Conditions of the Mulk of Kashmir), narrates Kashmir's history from Yusuf Shah Chak to the beginning of Jahangir's reign.[83]

The extant portions of the text, as the titles imply, reflect an emphasis on Kashmir as mulk, the sacred and secular pasts of which were deeply intertwined. *Riaz-ul Islam*, for instance, was written as a quintet (*panj ganj*) on the 'illustrious Sadat', 'miraculous

Shaykhs', 'divine Rishis', 'practitioner scholars', and poets of Kashmir, with the history of its rulers woven in.[84] The two texts, moreover, reveal the deep influence of Persian poets such as Firdausi, Nizami, Hafiz, and Jami on Kashmiri literature, and mark the emergence (despite the declining patronage for the arts) of the masnavi as a popular poetical genre that was utilized for multiple purposes,[85] including history, during the Afghan period. It is clear that *Shahnama-i Kashmir* paved the way for the composition of *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, which, much like the composite *Shahnama*, draws on a vast array of sources and is an eclectic mixture of a tarikh, tazkira, *razmiya* (battle poem), and a personal memoir of sorts.

Eighteenth-century Kashmir's tarikhs, much like their predecessors, were composed in conversation with Kashmir's narrative tradition, which authenticated and gave narrative coherence to these texts. However, they claimed a divergence in practice from the model of historical narration represented by earlier Sanskrit narratives and Persian tarikhs by asserting an authorial independence from the court, as well as from exaggeration, in order to narrate Kashmir's past as a story of its Sufi mystics as much as its kings. This allowed them to chart an autonomous space for their narratives as well as for Kashmir as mulk, which was the fundamental subject of their creations. The following sections address the specific ways in which the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century narratives defined Kashmir and narrated its historical past.

The Past as History

Kashmir's Persian tarikhs engaged with the past as tradition, and also as history, or a set of facts about Kashmir, the concrete political entity. In the latter respect, chronological temporality came to play an important role in rendering the past as the primary arena of historical and human characters and actions. As a result, the tarikhs recorded the dates, usually in *hijri* years, of the ascension of rulers to the throne, their demise, as well as other, notable political events. At the same time, they engaged with prior Sanskrit and Persian narratives as repositories of facts and tropes, converging with and distancing themselves from them in interesting ways; they were,

thus, far from simply passive imitations and continuations of these texts. These convergences and divergences reveal not only what the authors considered to be the primary purpose of historical narration, but also the co-existence of multiple temporalities, actors (both divine and human), and spatial ideas within their historical frameworks. Whether conceived of primarily as a place, a polity, or a mulk—the home of a group of people—or indeed a combination of all three ideas, Kashmir emerged within these texts as a powerful literary idea created and maintained by successive generations of writers.

Tarikh-i Haider Malik narrates Kashmir's early past with the twin objectives of establishing the author's royal genealogy, as well as placing Kashmir's past within the context of larger sacred and political geographies. Moreover, while acknowledging his sources as the 'chroniclers of the annals of the victorious emperors', he also holds them responsible for the veracity of the contents of their chronicles.[86] Like Kalhana, and the anonymous author of *Baharistan*, Haider Malik presents Kashmir's rulers from the remote past as conquerors of realms far beyond the borders of Kashmir. However, he discusses these events from Kashmir's ancient past with reference to similar events culled from the history of the Islamic world.

For instance, in relating the story of Raja Pravarsena's founding of Srinagar, clearly considered by these authors as an important moment in Kashmir's early past (it is also recorded in *Baharistan*), Haider Malik draws a parallel with Abu Jafar al-Mansur's (the second Abbasid Caliph) founding of Baghdad. He notes that just as Pravarsena had divine guidance (in a dream) in choosing the location of the new city, so too was al-Mansur given direction by a mystic in deciding to build the city of Baghdad.[87] In addition, Haider Malik points out notable events from Islamic history that occurred during the reigns of Kashmir's Hindu monarchs, such as the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina during the reign of Raja Ziyadat, from which, as Haider Malik points out, the Islamic calendar began.[88]

At the same time, a detailed discussion of the history of the early rulers of Kashmir allowed Haider Malik to trace the emergence of his own family, the Chands (Chadurahs), on the political landscape of the region. The political history of Kashmir and that of his own family, thus, became intertwined. He writes that he was the descendant of Raja Prithichand, the son of the Raja of Nagarkot (Jammu), who hailed from a Rajput race that was:

> related to Raja Badar, who, according to the sages of India was an *avatar*…. This Prithichand is the grand-father of the author of this book.… Thus until today, the kings of Jammu and Kashtwar write "Chand" as the title.… When Emperor Nuruddin Jahangir Padshah alighted in Jammu for hunting, I explained the meaning of this word to him. So, having come to know the truth about my ancestors, the Emperor out of his magnanimity, gave me as reward five lakhs of rupees (*dam*) out of the (revenue) of the said government.[89]

According to Chadurah, Prithichand was adopted by the ruler of Kashmir, Raja Shankarvarman, and raised as his own son because Prithichand 'had the signs of greatness in him'. On the ruler's death, he inherited the throne and ruled for a brief period of two years before his death in AD 1040.[90] Tracing his ancestry from the rulers of Jammu and Kashtwar, thus, also allowed Haider Malik to include these frontier districts into the definition of the Kashmiri polity.

Another ancestor of the author, Malchand (Raja Prithichand's descendant), makes an appearance in the narrative during the rule of Raja Sahamdev, when he performed certain services for the rulers of Kashmir, which, according to Haider Malik, 'have left an everlasting stamp on history' and 'have no parallels in history'.[91] Haider Malik presents Malchand as a man of courage, statesmanship, and justice. Malchand entered the enemy camp alone at night to collect information, where despite discovering the enemy commander unguarded, he did not kill him. More significantly, according to Haider Malik, he also acted as regent to the young prince after the ruler's death, and restored the throne to the prince after he came of age as its rightful occupant, despite his own exemplary rule.[92] Haider Malik draws parallels between these stories about his ancestor, which he states are mentioned in *Rajatarangini*, and similar stories and characters from Islamic

history, thus linking himself—and the land of which his story formed a part—to indigenous traditions, as much as narratives from the wider world of Islam. Haider Malik's ideas on ideal kingship were thus drawn not just from the Indo-Persian Mughal tradition represented by texts such as the *Ain-i Akbari*, but also from the indigenous Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions, as well as from Islamic histories that placed these kings in a much larger context.

The intertextuality between *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* and *Baharistan* becomes quite apparent when the former launches into a discussion of the history of Kashmir from the advent of Islam into the region. Like *Baharistan*, this begins not with the arrival of Sayyid Ali Hamadani, but rather with the conversion of the ruler, Rinchen, to Islam, long before Hamadani's advent into Kashmir. Rinchen is presented as possessing the light of justice, which led him to Shaykh Bulbul Shah, who initiated him into Islam, thus freeing him 'from the darkness of non-belief'.[93] The text also hails the arrival of Sayyid Ali Hamadani into Kashmir during the rule of Sultan Qutubuddin, and his significant impact on the practice of Islam in Kashmir, while also linking the fortunes of the Sultanate to Hamadani's blessings, as embodied in his cap:

> Thus Kashmir vied with paradise because of his [Sayyid Ali Hamadani's] auspicious arrival here…. The Hazrat presented his own blessed cap to Sultan Qutab-ud-Din which the Sultan placed on his crown. It was inherited by his descendents (sic.) until the time of Fath Shah and when Fath Shah died, it was, following his will, placed inside his shroud. When this information reached my venerated teacher Kamal Allah, son of Moulvi Muhammad Ali, may peace be upon him, he said that this was an indication that the time of the transfer of kingship from the family of the Shahan was nearby. And this is what actually happened.[94]

In addition, unlike in the *Ain-i Akbari*, but much like in narratives such as *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, the text lauds Sultan Sikandar as a pious man who, under the direction of Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, removed the darkness of infidelity from the hearts of Kashmiris.[95]

For Haider Malik, thus, the writing of the past was a commemoration of the acts of predecessors and bygone rulers 'who spent their lives in building cities for the welfare of the people and

have won praise from people of the same status'.[96] This past, however, was placed not in a Mughal context, but rather in local and universal frameworks. As a result, it could not be simply about its rulers and kings, but had to be quite as much about its Sufi mystics and their marvellous actions that shaped its landscape.

Asserting this methodological necessity, Haider Malik notes, 'Let it not remain a secret to the intelligent recorders of unique events that in historical works it is essential to include biographies which may be of a strange nature for the sake of events, even though they may not be found in the original works.'[97] The text thus ends, in a similar fashion to *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, with an account of 'the mendicants, ascetics and men of God who gave up personal desires and greed as they viewed the world as non-permanent and have, through their spiritual efforts and experiences, become knowledgeable of the truths relating to this world'.[98] This section describes in detail the spiritual attributes and attainments of the indigenous Rishi, Shaykh Nooruddin, and his disciples. A substantial portion also discusses Shaykh Shamsuddin Iraqi's arrival in Kashmir and his activities in the realm of removing infidelity from the land.[99]

In delineating Kashmir's political past concisely and briefly, which, as noted earlier, was the main objective of *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Narayan Koul, the text displays significant convergences with the *Ain-i Akbari* and Kashmir's Sanskrit and Persian historical traditions, while also diverging from the latter in significant ways. Drawing on Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, the text records the reigns of the successive rajas of Kashmir, whose age, it states, began immediately after the settlement of the land by Kashyap Rishi, recounting the miraculous tales associated with them.[100] The text seems to place no special value on the rule of the early Hindu kings in particular, and it transitions to the period of Kashmir's Sultans in a matter of fact manner. The text notes: 'Sultan Rinchen was a just ruler. He was the first ruler of Kashmir to accept Islam. Shah Mir came to Kashmir at this time, along with his son Haidar Khan, and they became members of Rinchen Shah's court. As Rinchen drew closer to Shah Mir and his son, he began to convert to Islam'.[101] The text thus does not present Rinchen's conversion as a call from

God mediated by the Sufi saint Bulbul Shah, but rather as a consequence of his close political relations with Shah Mir, a Muslim noble from Swadgir who had emerged as an influential member of the Kashmiri court and whose political support Rinchen needed to survive as ruler.

Indeed this idea seems to echo the *Ain-i Akbari*, which notes, 'He [Rinchen] appointed Shah Mir his minister whose religion, through intimacy and association with him, he eventually adopted.'[102] However, drawing on the indigenous Persian narrative tradition, Narayan Koul discusses the advent of Sayyid Ali Hamadani to Kashmir as a welcome event, hailing it, in verse, as bringing good fortune to Kashmir. He also recounts the story of Hamadani's cap, the burial of which along with Sultan Fath Shah's body is said to have brought about the end of the Kashmiri Sultanate.[103]

On the matter of Sultan Sikandar's rule, however, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* charts an altogether independent course than either the *Ain-i Akbari* or indigenous Sanskrit and Persian narratives. As we have seen, Sikandar was lauded as 'But Shikan' (Idol Breaker) in previous Persian tarikhs and tazkiras of Kashmir, while the Sanskrit narratives and the *Ain-i Akbari* described him as a bigot. *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* mentions Sikandar's destruction of temples almost as an aside, attributing his activities against Hindus to Sultan Timur Lane's orders, not to those of Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani. The text does make a mention of Hamadani's arrival with his companions and other Sufi scholars during Sultan Sikandar's time, who built shrines and mosques at his behest. But it accords the following motivation for the Sultan's iconoclastic activities:

> During this time, Amir Taymur Gorgan sent a message, along with some gifts, to Sultan Sikandar with Moulana Nooruddin. The *farman* [royal edict] sent to Sultan Sikandar asked him to accept Taymur Gorgan's sovereignty over Kashmir, which Sultan Sikandar did. Taymur then ruled from Kashmir to Samarqand with the help of Sultan Sikandar. An envoy sent by Taymur came to Kashmir and ordered the destruction of all its temples. Sultan Sikandar obeyed the command and demolished all the temples. Sultan Sikandar ruled for 25 years, 9 months, and 6 days.[104]

In the same way as the text does not present Sultan Sikandar as a willful persecutor of Hindus, it does not present his son and successor, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, as their rehabilitator. While lauding the Sultan's activities in the realm of architecture and the patronage of the arts and crafts in detail, the text remains silent about his patronage of Hindu scholars and his attempts at reinstating the position of Hindus in the court and in Kashmiri society as a whole in the wake of his father's policies.[105]

In this, Narayan Koul's work is in marked contrast to not only the Persian narratives from Kashmir, but also to the Sanskrit chronicling tradition. Persian texts uniformly acclaimed Sultan Sikandar for his efforts in the realm of religion, while berating Sultan Zain ul-Abidin for introducing policies that slid Kashmir back to infidelity. On the other hand, the Sanskrit texts maligned Sultan Sikandar and the Sufi mystics associated with the court, particularly Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, for destroying temples, burning Hindus texts, and causing Hindu emigration from Kashmir. Writing about the advent of Mir Muhammad Hamadani and his associates, for instance, Jonaraja wrote in his continuation of *Rajatarangini* (composed during Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's rule), 'As the wind destroys the trees, and the locusts the shali crop, so did the Yavanas [Muslims] destroy the usages of Kashmira.'[106] At the same time, the texts extolled Sultan Zain ul-Abidin for restoring Hindus to their rightful position in Kashmiri society, endowing him with a semi-divine status. *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, while drawing on both traditions, downplays the religious proclivities and activities of the rulers, in part by harnessing them to larger political concerns. As a result, it is also the only Persian history of Kashmir that does not include a section on Sufis and other mystics of Kashmir. In this sense, the text reclaimed Kashmir as a political entity in its own right, whose historical narrative was driven by temporal concerns rather than religious affairs and spiritual authorities.

For texts such as *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* and *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, the primary focus of historical narration was the chronological narrative of kings and the nature of government. However, even in this case, Haider Malik was insistent on including a section on the Sufi divines of Kashmir within the text, as well as on

deviating from the narrative to draw Kashmir's past into the history of the Islamic world. This was partly an attempt to carve out and assert a distinct political space for Kashmir, maintain control over its definition, and through it, the relative autonomy of Kashmir's nobility within the Mughal imperial system. These groups recognized the benefit of recording their own personal histories in tandem with those of the region, which was itself far more clearly defined as a polity within the Mughal Empire. Thus, rather than reading Kashmir's tarikh tradition as another product of the Mughal imperialist project in Kashmir, it is far more fruitful to examine the ways in which the authors of Kashmir's tarikhs negotiated their own as well as Kashmir's position within the new political system.

Narrating the Mulk and Its Past

For both *Waqiat-i Kashmir* and *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, affirming Kashmir's autonomy in narrative and symbolic, if not actual, terms was especially critical given the context of Mughal decline and Kashmir's transition to Afghan rule. Thus, the central subject of both texts was Kashmir as mulk. This involved describing the mulk itself, and its unique attributes, as well as narrating its distinct past, the spiritual and political narratives of which, as pointed out earlier, were barely distinguishable. *Waqiat-i Kashmir* is in some ways a much more local narrative, which narrates Kashmir's intertwined spiritual and political pasts alongside events that shaped its physical landscape, such as fires, earthquakes, epidemics, and famines. *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, on the other hand, reverts to being a more universal text, which places Kashmir's historical narrative in the context of broader events in the history of Islam.

The centrality of the mulk to *Waqiat-i Kashmir* is evident from the fact that instead of writing in praise of the author's patron, or the contemporary ruler—which usually followed the hamd in praise of God and the prophet in most Persian tarikhs, including *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* and *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*—*Waqiat-i Kashmir* launches into a lengthy encomium to Kashmir's incomparable nature amongst all the countries of the world.[107] Furthermore, in the *muqadimmah* (introduction), Dyadmari specifically describes

Kashmir as a mulk—not merely as a sarkar as in the *Ain-i Akbari* and later histories—which is located in the fourth clime, with a precise latitudinal and longitudinal location.[108] In addition, there is a much more concrete sense in *Waqiat-i Kashmir* than in earlier texts of what lies beyond Kashmir's territorial confines: 'Its southern mountains are in the direction of Delhi and its northern mountains towards the direction of Badakhshan and Khorasan. Towards the west, it leads to those areas known as Pakhli, where the Afghans reside, and its eastern frontier ends where the lands of Tibet begin.'[109]

Although the text's actual description of Kashmir is reminiscent of earlier texts, in particular Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, and to a lesser extent, Mirza Haider Dughlat's *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, and Abul Fazl's *Ain-i Akbari*, it is much more stunning in its detail and invests Kashmir with an emotional meaning not found in earlier Persian narratives. Dyadmari describes in turn Kashmir's sweet springs, lush meadows, blooming gardens, fruit-filled orchards, and pure climate, stating that its reinvigorating breezes had the capacity, much like Hazrat Issa (Jesus), to breathe life back into the dead.[110] Echoing Kalhana, Dyadmari states that Kashmir was an especially blessed land: 'Mountains and forests surround this mulk like the walls of a fort and until the people of the land themselves invite in invaders and join them, no one dare conquer it'.[111] The section then proceeds to describe the various types of land found in the region alongside the plants and crops cultivated on each, Kashmir's houses, and its capital city with its many bridges. Dyadmari ends the preface by noting that Kashmir was so beautiful that people from outside the region came to enjoy its pleasures and poets had penned more verses in its praise than in praise of any other land.[112]

Moreover, the history of Kashmir, the mulk, had to begin with its origin. The first chapter of the text thus begins with the familiar description of the emergence of Kashmir from Satisar, as recorded, according to Dyadmari, by Hindu historians (*tarikh-navis*). Here the story follows *Rajatarangini* quite closely, except when the author states that the land emerged and was settled by Brahman families after Noah's flood.[113]

As argued in the previous chapter, by delineating its sacred past, Sanskrit texts and Persian narratives laid the foundation for describing Kashmir as a unique and especially blessed land as much as a political territory. What was distinct about Dyadmari's text, however, was that it drew the contours of Kashmir as a mulk, not merely a sacred landscape or a political division, thus investing the idea of Kashmir with a new meaning. Furthermore, by emphasizing Kashmir as a mulk that had features that set it apart from the rest of the world and the mulks that surrounded it, Dyadmari presented it as capable of standing on its own as a distinct region, rather than as part of larger Brahmanical, Islamic, Mughal, or Afghan worlds.

The historical narrative itself that gave shape and voice to the mulk, moreover, was now synonymous with it. *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, thus, ends with a masnavi that celebrates the text and the labours that went into its making, describing it as a blooming garden (much like Kashmir):

I had carved on the slate of my heart that I would decorate the garden of Kashmir,
I asked for God Almighty's help in searching for the pearls of knowledge.
From the books of knowledge I discovered the conditions of saints and rulers,
My pen illuminated the darkness like a candle by recounting the deeds of the pure and pious.
Every page of this book is decorated like a garden with a variety of topics,
It is pure like the hearts of the wise and illuminates like the eyes of those with foresight.
What other purpose did it have than to elaborate on the deeds of great men?
Its motivation was to leave some trace behind. Oh God, keep this book eternal![114]

Waqiat-i Kashmir thus firmly established not only the contours of Kashmir as a mulk (a distinct region), but also the role of the individual tarikh-navis in delineating them, and the mulk's past, for a wider audience through his creation—the tarikh.

The narrative of the mulk's past, moreover, had to be a combination of the sacred and temporal. To an extent, thus, *Waqiat-i Kashmir* reverted to the tradition of texts such as *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* in endowing Sufi saints and religious divines with power over kings. However, each incident related in *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, particularly

those connected to the biographies or activities of the Sayyids who came to Kashmir from Central Asia and spread Islam in the land, is carefully weighed through a discussion of conflicting popular traditions and texts to present what the text claimed was the historically accurate version. For instance, based on his study of oral and historical traditions, Dyadmari argues that Shaykh Bulbul Shah, who converted Sultan Rinchen to Islam, was sent by his murshid to spread Islam in the land of Kashmir and had been living in Kashmir since the last Hindu ruler, Raja Sahadev's reign.[115] Similarly, he argues that Sayyid Ali Hamadani visited Kashmir three times, not just once during Sultan Qutubuddin's reign.[116] Many of these ideas, including the detailed genealogies of Sufi divines recorded in *Waqiat-i Kashmir* —delineated for the first time in one tarikh—can be found in later histories of Kashmir, particularly those written in the nineteenth century.

Further, for *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, the mulk's historical narrative was divided along sectarian lines. *Waqiat-i Kashmir* is the first text to specifically divide Kashmir's historical narrative into the reign of Hindu kings and Muslim Sultans, a historiographical division that persists into the twenty-first century. That these sections were not created by later scribes is evident from the fact that Dyadmari himself notes the existence of distinct sections in the preface: an introduction (muqadimmah), followed by three chapters, and a conclusion. According to him, the introduction described the features of the land of Kashmir; the first chapter detailed the reigns of the successive rulers before the advent of Islam; the second chapter discussed the Sultans of Kashmir after the advent of Islam; the third chapter discussed the conditions prevalent in Kashmir during the rule of the Chagatai (Mughal) emperors; and the conclusion detailed the strange and wondrous places, events and personalities related to the land of Kashmir.[117] Dyadmari was also the first author to identify the Sanskrit chroniclers of Kashmir as Hindus and the historians who wrote in Persian as Muslim, although clearly these categories held very different meanings than those that prevail in the contemporary period.

The text's sectarian focus has to be located in the context of its composition at the moment of an almost complete breakdown of

Mughal authority in Kashmir.[118] Indeed, this strain is particularly apparent in the text's discussion of events in the recent past, to which the author was an eye-witness, and which the text utilizes as a site for the negotiation of competing interests. *Waqiat-i Kashmir* presents the devolution of power to local intermediaries and religious elites—who highlighted religious difference in an attempt to gain and retain political influence—as a negative consequence of Mughal decline. In an incident described in detail in the text, it is apparent that Dyadmari perceived this as the cause of sectarian unrest in Kashmir.

According to *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, when Mir Ahmed Khan was naib-subahdar of Kashmir, the Qazi of Kashmir, Mahtavi Khan, forbade Pandits to observe their religious rites, wear turbans, ride horses, or wear *tika*s (caste marks) on their foreheads. He also expected the naib to enforce his orders. Ahmed Khan, according to Dyadmari, opposed the Qazi because he realized that Hindus held important positions in the Mughal court and in the administration of Kashmir. He invited the Qazi to his home in an attempt to dissuade him from exacting heavy fines from those who infringed these orders. A huge crowd gathered around the naib-subahdar's home in support of the Qazi as people pulled Hindus off their horses and looted their homes. Ahmed Khan had to call in a force to curb the disturbance, which he managed to accomplish; however, the incident hurt his reputation and he was recalled by the Mughal court. In the meantime, the Qazi was assassinated and another conflagration took place in a Shia neighbourhood as Sunnis blamed the Shia for colluding with Hindus during the earlier disturbance and for assassinating the Qazi. Eventually, the new Mughal naib, Momin Khan, entered Kashmir with a military force and restored order.[119]

Waqiat-i Kashmir's narrative of the recent past and contemporary events, with its particular emphasis on religious difference, especially conflict, was mapped onto larger emergent socio-political categories such as Hindu, Muslim, Sunni, and Shia, and attempted to delineate the relative status of these groups within the mulk. The devolution of power to local intermediaries in the wake of the breakdown of Mughal authority in Kashmir led to the sharpening of sectarian and religious divisions on the body politic, even as food

shortages and outright famines exacerbated these divisions. That Hindus came to be identified in these texts as a distinct community is not surprising given that Kashmiri Pandits had attained high positions in the administration of Kashmir by the late Mughal period. Texts such as *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, and later *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, played a defining role in identifying these communities as not only distinct, but also as responsible for the crisis faced by the mulk. Further, an emphasis on the centrality of certain shrines and those associated with them to Kashmir's past became a means for these texts to reclaim what they perceived as the waning influence of these (usually Sunni) institutions and individuals during a moment of political transition in contemporary Kashmir.

The identification of the self (author) with mulk through his creation—the historical narrative—is palpable in Saadullah Shahabadi's versified *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, which was written soon after Kashmir's transition to Afghan rule. After the hamd in praise of God, *naat* in praise of the prophet, and a *mankabat* in praise of his spiritual guide,[120] Shahabadi immediately moves to a lament about the wretched state of Kashmir. In this, the text reads like a narrative in the eighteenth-century Indian poetic tradition of *shahr-i ashob*, which eulogized and mourned the decline of Hindustan. The mulk was no longer defined by its beauty and literary tradition, as in *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, but rather by widespread desolation, dishonesty, tyranny, and misrule occasioned by the advent of the Afghans. This tyranny was not merely material, but also corporeal, as men were killed with impunity and women were turned into slaves by the rulers and their agents. It appears, writes Shahabadi, as though there were no well-wishers of the *qaum* left to direct its people to the right path; instead detractors sent people in erroneous directions. In this situation that resembled *qayamat* (apocalypse), he writes that he hid within his own self and mused with worry, but his heart told him not to turn away because this was part of God's plan.[121] This led him to the decision to write a history of the mulk to alleviate people's pain and illuminate the darkness and wretchedness with light:

Read this *tarikh-nama*,
It will bring solace to your heart….

Do not ask the outer covering its actual meaning,
This book is a bride that will reveal itself in one glance.
It is worthy of presentation to Raja Sukh Jeewan,
It was composed in verse for the desire of poets and scholars.
If the pages of this book are counted,
They will make more of an impression than the perusal of any other book.
Even if I may not have done anything of value,
I have sifted the grain from the chaff [in this book].
Without any compulsion or force,
I begin this *qissa* with *bismillah*.[122]

It is clear that *Bagh-i Sulaiman* was meant not just for scholars and poets, but for all the people of Kashmir suffering under Afghan rule. The text gives voice to the collective category of people or the Kashmiri social—identified for the first time in Kashmir's tarikh tradition as qaum—that could be uplifted from its abject state (or at least offered solace) in part through a narration of its past. As a result, *Bagh-i Sulaiman* displays a keen sense of the author/historian as representative of the land of Kashmir, which could now only be described through its people's tribulations. The genealogy of the people of the land was thus as important as the genealogy of the land itself, or that of its narrative tradition. So for instance, Shahabadi begins the political narrative of Kashmir's history by describing the divine origins of Kashmir from Satisar through the efforts of Kashyap Rishi and Lord Brahma, while also noting that the land was settled and populated in the beginning by Hindus.[123] Moreover, he writes pointedly that his father hailed from Badakhshan, his mother from Kabul, but that it was his fate to be born in Kashmir.[124] His self-identification as Kashmiri due to his birth in the land of Kashmir is telling and makes this a narrative not just of a place and polity, but also of its people.

Highlighting the significance of Sufis of the Sunni persuasion and their activities in Kashmir is central to *Bagh-i Sulaiman*'s political narrative of Kashmir's past. It goes further, in fact, by placing Kashmir's sacred past within the context of the sacred history of Islam itself. While recording the reign of successive Hindu rajas drawn from Sanskrit texts, Shahabadi breaks the chronology to

describe at length the birth and emergence of the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia, stating that the memory of the prophet had 'crossed his mind like a fresh scent', causing him to digress.[125] He narrates the entire life story of the prophet, his campaigns for Islam, his activities during each year of his reign in Medina, and the succession of the four caliphs after his death.[126] He thus establishes a basis for the advent of Sayyids (descendants of the prophet) into Kashmir to spread the word of Islam, usually giving detailed genealogies that linked Sufi mystics such as Sayyid Ali Hamadani directly to Ali, the prophet's son-in-law and the fourth caliph.[127] In this way, the text blends the story of the Sufi mystics who came to Kashmir with the longer history of Islam, as well as the political history of Kashmir.

The text shapes the narrative of the Sultanate period through a discussion of major political events, such as the invasion by the Turk Zulchu that paved the way for the establishment of the Sultanate. But the political narrative too is more concerned with recording the impact of the arrival of Sufi mystics from Central Asia and Persia to Kashmir, as well as the emergence of local mystics, who are claimed unquestioningly into the fold of Islam. *Bagh-i Sulaiman* is the first historical narrative, for instance, to pen verses in praise of the fourteenth-century mystic poetess Lal Ded, who is celebrated as Lalla Arifa:

Lalla Arifa is the conscience of all men,
In the eyes of God, she holds a status higher than most men.
According to their abilities, commoners and specially blessed individuals alike can learn from her,
She is loved by all.
She kept the rule of God over her heart hidden as a child,
When she grew up, the light of God began to shine forth from her.
She was married on her father's orders,
But in her heart she was not happy.
She ate little, talked little, socialized little, slept little.
The wound in her heart caused by God's love caused her to cry all the time.[128]

The text records popular traditions associated with Lal Ded, describing her meeting with Sayyid Ali Hamadani (although it is clear that she died before his arrival in Kashmir), the incident in which she fed the infant Nooruddin with her own breast, and the dissolution of her body into water at her death.[129] Nooruddin Rishi's life and spiritual peregrinations are described in great detail, and he is hailed as a great visionary[130] during the rule of Sultan Zain ul-Abidin, who in turn is presented as a great conqueror and patron of the arts.[131] There is no mention of Zain ul-Abidin's encouragement of infidelity after the rule of his father, Sultan Sikandar, who is unsurprisingly lauded as an idol-breaker and destroyer of Hindu temples, and the patron of Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, who came to Kashmir during his rule.[132]

Bagh-i Sulaiman's narrative of Kashmir's recent past is deeply concerned with the decline of the mulk as a result of the establishment of Afghan rule, and the sectarian underpinnings of this decline.[133] This is particularly apparent in the text's description of the advent of the Afghans and the depths of ignominy into which the people of the mulk had fallen as a result: 'Every lane was filled with the wailing of the flute, / At the mention of the Afghans. / This entire land was the garden of Solomon, / And now these *dev*s have completely destroyed it'.[134] The text relates the policies of successive Afghan governors as cruel and inhuman, which ruined trade, bankrupted shopkeepers, reduced peasants to penury, and created famine. It further notes that Kashmiri Shia and Hindus were the advisors of the Afghan governors.[135] Responding in particular to the ascent of Kashmiri Pandits within the administration, Shahabadi calls them enemies of the mulk who helped Afghan governors to loot Kashmir and oppress Muslims: 'When Hindus were doing everything backwards, / How could the mulk progress on a straight path?'[136] He ends the text by pleading with god to shower his mercy on Kashmir and protect it from these tyrannies.[137]

Waqiat-i Kashmir and *Bagh-i Sulaiman* centred their narratives on the history of the mulk and its people in the wake of the breakdown of the Mughal system in Kashmir, although the category of people was less well defined in *Waqiat-i Kashmir*. The mulk was described

through its unique geography, naturally delineated boundaries, and the activities of Sufi mystics on its landscape, even as the narrative of the two texts followed a more or less chronological account of Kashmir's rulers. While maintaining a fidelity to the political chronology of Kashmir's past, the tarikhs often diverged from it to make forays into alternative temporalities where semi-divine entities performed their miraculous actions, and extended spatialities in which Kashmir's historical landscape merged with that of Islam. The past of the mulk was thus narrated in an episodic manner which not only highlighted the mulk as a product of and heir to its multiple literary traditions, but also asserted the importance of the historian and his creations in establishing the narrative of its past.

Narrating Mughal Rule

A study of the ways in which the texts under discussion here narrated the advent and nature of Mughal rule in Kashmir (which they dealt with at some length) illuminates the changing political contexts of their composition from the beginning to the end of the Mughal presence in the region. In addition, the shades within the narration bring out the intertextuality amongst these narratives and with the earlier narratives as they told and retold the same stories to put forward the possibility of a range of relationships between Kashmir and the Mughal Empire. This, in turn, was a means to highlight the significance of particular social groups over others within the context of the regional Mughal imperial system. Far from condemning it outright as a form of imperial conquest, thus, Kashmir's Persian narratives presented Mughal rule from varied perspectives. This illustrates that they were not mere reflections of the political context, but that they had played an active role in shaping the relationship between the two entities.

Although written when the author was serving as Jahangir's governor, it is interesting to note the ambivalence displayed by *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* towards Mughal rule. The text simultaneously asserts the distinctiveness of Kashmir within the Mughal Empire, warning the Mughals to exercise power carefully, and also legitimizes Mughal rule over the realm. While hailing the fact that

world rule and the *khilafat* had been bestowed by the almighty on 'the illustrious and glorious family of Gurgan', whose rule had freed various parts of the empire from oppression and tyranny, Haider Malik notes that the power of monarchs, especially those who become haughty with power, was transitory. It was thus better 'that men should earn a good name for themselves until the day of Judgment by good character, good actions and helping those who need comfort, and should avoid evil deeds and take the beggar's bowl in their hands'.[138]

The text ends with what the author describes as a 'miracle' performed by Kanki Rishi Baba, who refused to present himself to Akbar when the latter invited him to do so during one of his visits to Kashmir. Jahangir (then prince Salim) took permission from his father to visit Kanki Rishi instead, who upon seeing Jahangir, 'conveyed to him the happy news of government and world-rule'.[139] This is not the first time that Haider Malik's text endows legitimacy on Mughal rule in Kashmir through the actions or prophecies of Sufi mystics. In an earlier discussion of the Chak ruler Yusuf Shah Chak's attempts at keeping Akbar's advancing army at bay by sending his son to the emperor's court with presents, Haider Malik notes the pointlessness of such actions due to the inevitability of the Mughal conquest of Kashmir. He relates the incident in which the Nurbakhshiya mystic, Shamsuddin Iraqi, destroyed the temple of Parahaspura and found a box under its gate which contained a ruby, a bottle, and a paper, on which was recorded that:

> 'After one thousand and five hundred years, a person will come to Kashmir from the *vilayat* of Iraq with this name who will destroy this temple. From the price of the ruby, the Khanqah of Amir Kabir Sayyid Ali Hamadani will be built. Then, the bottle which contains the water of immortality *ab-i hayat* will be broken by him, mistaking it for wine, for this is what God has ordained. Then, during the time of the Chaks, Kashmir will pass from the authority of the Sultans and go under the control of the Chaghtay rulers.' Intelligent men … knew that the writing discovered from the box was an indication that the events were about to take place.[140]

Stories associated with royal and saintly figures from earlier Persian texts appear to come together with some variations in the above description. In *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* (also alluded to in

Baharistan), for instance, the precious stone that financed the construction of Hamadani's khanqah was a diamond given to Sultan Sikandar by Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani.[141] Additionally, Sultan Sikandar is credited with having destroyed the temple at Parahaspura, again, under the orders of Muhammad Hamadani, but there is no mention of the discovery of a prophecy from beneath its walls[142] (this begins to be recorded in later Persian histories, but in those cases the prophecy does not mention the Mughals). By ascribing the destruction of the temple to Iraqi and the subsequent discovery of the prophecy that predicted the passage of Kashmiri sovereignty into Mughal hands, *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* simultaneously links and endows legitimacy to the Nurbhakshiya sect and to Mughal rule in Kashmir.

Despite the fact that the text presents the advent of Mughal rule as pre-ordained, a large portion of it is devoted to a description of the pitched battles fought between Mughal forces and those headed by Kashmiri nobles and rulers, in which Mughal armies are identified as the forces of the enemy, and their victory is far from a foregone conclusion. However, these descriptions do not necessarily present all Kashmiris as heroes while painting Mughal soldiers as villains. Notably, however, the latter are portrayed as outsiders. In an earlier discussion of the end of Mirza Haider Dughlat's rule in 1551, Haider Malik relates an incident not seen in earlier texts (including *Baharistan*) in which Mirza Haider Dughlat (who ruled Kashmir as Humanyun's representative) was killed by a Kashmiri butcher. This, the text implies, was because Dughlat was unable to reply to the butcher's question when he was asked to identify himself in the vernacular language Kashmiri, thereby revealing Dughlat's foreign identity and marking him as a spy for the Turkish forces. Haider Malik relates that when the butcher realized this, he 'hit the Mirza's head with the axe with which he was skinning the cow, and killed him'.[143]

This story was a means to present the Mirza as lacking legitimacy to rule Kashmir, especially in the context of his severe persecution of the Nurbakhshiya sect, to which the author himself belonged. It was also, however, a subtle suggestion to the Mughals that their success as rulers depended on following the ways of the inhabitants

of Kashmir, especially in respecting their Sufi orders and carrying out their rule in a non-sectarian manner.

Returning now to the Mughal conquest, the text, as also *Baharistan*, lays the blame for the ultimate Mughal victory on the poor statesmanship of the last two Chak rulers, Yusuf Shah and his son Yacub Shah. Yusuf Shah remained 'busy with this useless business (of amusement) and did not really get the army ready',[144] engaging himself instead in plotting and creating dissension amongst the nobility, while also ignoring Akbar's repeated orders to present himself at his court. Yacub Shah, on the other hand, while courageously taking up the cause of war against the Mughal forces after his father's abdication, created much-dreaded religious dissension by brutally persecuting Sunni nobles and clerics. Many of these individuals rebelled against him in Kashmir, while others went to Hindustan to seek the help of Mughal forces in dethroning him. Policies creating religious dissension, in the case of Mirza Haider Dughlat against the Nurbakhshiya and Shia in general, or Sultan Yacub Shah Chak against the Sunnis, are presented by the text as the main reason for the undoing of rulers and dynasties.

According to the text, once it was clear that Mughal forces were in control of the city of Srinagar, and Yacub Shah had retreated towards Kashtwar (Jammu), most Kashmiri nobles approached Akbar's court, where they were handed out good positions.[145] The political narrative of the text closes with the mention of continued disturbances by the Chaks, which were 'vanquished completely' when the author entered the service of Jahangir, again reiterating his loyalty to the Mughal crown.[146] This is corroborated by *Baharistan*, which eulogizes Haider Malik's rule in Kashmir as ending the misrule of early Mughal governors by taking special 'care for the development and progress of these lands'.[147] At the same time, the termination of the Chaks is seen as a lamentable event in both texts, since it implied the end of Kashmiri sovereignty. However, both texts close on a positive note with the final incorporation of Kashmir into the Mughal Empire, and with the region looking forward to a period of centralization and stability.

Muntakhab appears to be more neutral towards Mughal rule than its predecessor, although it too describes at length the century following Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's death (1470) as one of decline, which eventually led to the Mughal conquest of the region. The text illustrates the gradual weakening of the court and the emergence of in-fighting and continually shifting allegiances amongst Kashmiri noble families who were eager to gain control of the centre. It also notes the devastating impact of natural disasters such as floods, famines, and earthquakes that hit Kashmir, which were exacerbated by the political turmoil during this time.[148] Its descriptions of the often bloody battles amongst the armies of Kashmiri nobles, and between Kashmiri armies and Mughal forces are clearly drawn from *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*. Kashmir appears as a region constantly under siege in this period, in contrast to neighbouring Mughal provinces, such as Lahore, which the text describes as peaceful and prosperous places devoid of any fear of enemies.[149] In this context, the conquest of Kashmir by Akbar seems inevitable, although by no means foreordained, and the text describes the rebellions and battles that continued to plague Kashmir after the installation of the first Mughal subahdar, Qasim Khan.[150]

Since it is a political chronicle, a substantial part of the text is devoted to a brief discussion of the rule of each Mughal subahdar, ending with the description of naib-subahdar Arif Khan, the author's patron. There is little discussion of the Mughal emperors themselves, other than as visitors to the Valley; for instance, 'Because Kashmir is like a garden in springtime, Akbar badshah decided to visit here'.[151] The text records each visit by a Mughal emperor, and the amount of time he spent promenading in the Valley, a trend continued by later Persian tarikhs. The author's patron's rule is described as restoring the 'peace and purity' of the beautiful Valley, which had been disturbed during the rule of previous subahdars.[152] It is only in this context that Narayan Koul alludes to the impact of the decline of the Mughal Empire in Kashmir, which does not appear to be a larger concern of the text as a whole.

As noted earlier, *Waqiat-i Kashmir* was composed in the context of the breakdown of Mughal authority in Kashmir, although it is more concerned with the impact of this on the mulk, rather than the decline of the Mughal Empire itself. This is apparent in its description of the incident between the Mughal deputy governor and the Qazi of Kashmir, discussed earlier, which the text attributes to the failure of the Mughal imperial system that led to the emergence of indigenous sectarian groups. In addition, the text describes the misrule by successive Mughal governors and their deputies in the eighteenth century, and the resultant famines, epidemics, and conflicts in graphic detail with the eye of a contemporary observer, sometimes in verse. The text notes that the author of this narrative had written a masnavi imbued with shahr-i-ashob (decline of the city) brought about by the famines, when there were riots over grain and it sold for the price of gold.[153] Dyadmari narrates the conditions prevalent during a mid-eighteenth century famine thus:

> To what extent can I describe the situation during this event? Even the waters of the river had rotted with the stench of the dead bodies that had been thrown in it. Dogs, cats, crows, and vultures feasted on the bodies that had been left on the banks, and in fact I have also heard that people ate people and children were roasted by the hungry.[154]

Waqiat-i Kashmir paints the political and social situation of Kashmir preceding Mughal conquest in similar terms, replete with religious dissension and political unrest caused by the enmities amongst the Kashmiri nobility and Sultan Yacub Shah Chak's anti-Sunni policies.[155] The text displays a strong sense of regionalism, clearly presenting Mughals as outsiders, but at the same time asserting that it was prominent Kashmiris, such as Sheikh Yacub Sarfi, who invited Akbar to conquer the Valley and end the chaos prevalent in the land: 'People began to tire of this ruler's [Yacub Shah] tyranny and the elders began to migrate from Kashmir. Baba Daud Khaki left for Multan for pilgrimage of his pir's tomb. Sheikh Yacub Sarfi brought together a group of elders and left for Akbar's court in Hindustan to encourage him to conquer Kashmir'.[156] Significantly, this is the first historical text from Kashmir that places

the entire initiative for the conquest of Kashmir in the hands of Kashmiris, as well as mentions and lays out the terms of the agreement between Kashmiri representatives and Akbar in great detail. These included non-interference in Kashmir's religious affairs, assurances that the Mughal court would not take Kashmir's grain or enslave Kashmiris, and that Kashmir's nobles would maintain their prosperity and independence.[157]

There is no actual evidence that such an agreement was in fact reached between Kashmiri representatives and Akbar. Its inclusion in *Waqiat-i Kashmir* reflects the author's attempt at endowing Kashmiris with some measure of agency in the mulk's association with the Mughal Empire. This was particularly critical during a period of economic and political uncertainty occasioned by the near collapse of the Mughal administrative system, when the nature of the relationship between Kashmir and the Mughal Empire was itself undefined. The later portion of the text is shot through with a sense of nostalgia for bygone times (including during the height of Mughal rule), when Kashmir was a peaceful realm where people were free to enjoy its many pleasures without fear of hunger and conflict.[158]

Bagh-i Sulaiman, which was composed during early Afghan rule, was also deeply concerned, as we have seen, with the declension of the mulk and its people. It does not, however, attribute this to the decline of the Mughal central authority, but rather to the establishment of Afghan rule in Kashmir. In stark contrast to its descriptions of Afghan rule, the text presents Mughal rule as a victory of the just and righteous over religious charlatans and apostasy. In some ways, the text traces the roots of the advent of the Mughals to the entry of Shamsuddin Iraqi into Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Hassan Shah, and the consequent establishment of a Shia presence in Kashmir. Dismissing the Sultan as a libertine interested only in musical assemblies, the text laments the fact that he invited Iraqi, who is labelled a Shia, to Kashmir, thus allowing him to surreptitiously spread his faith while pretending to be Sunni.[159] Shahabadi attributes the conflict and dissension in Kashmiri society in that period to Iraqi's activities in spreading what, according to Shahabadi, was heresy. In fact, according to him, the Sultanate ended and the Chaks (some of whom were Nurbakhshiya) emerged

as the rulers entirely because of Iraqi's influence on certain sections of the Kashmiri nobility.[160]

As a result, instead of lamenting the end of Chak rule, and with it Kashmiri independence, *Bagh-i Sulaiman* celebrates the advent of Mughal rule in Kashmir as the rightful sectarian victory for the Sunnis. It quite clearly states that Sheikh Yacub Sarfi, a Sunni elder, approached Akbar's commander, Qasim Khan, and helped Mughal forces to conquer Kashmir to end the rule of Yacub Shah Chak, who was persecuting Sunnis in Kashmir.[161] So heinous were Yacub Shah's policies that Kashmiris deserted his army and joined Mughal forces.[162] Akbar gave a general reprieve to Kashmiri rebels after the Mughal victory, awarding mansabs to those Kashmiris who had helped Mughal forces.[163] The purity of *bagh-i Kashmir* (garden of Kashmir) was thus restored:

Mulk-i-Kashmir was honored by Akbar Shah's rule,
As he entered from Hirapur, all conflict and dissension left Kashmir.
The land blossomed with the air of spring,
Even the hay and thorns burst into flowers….
May God's grace be multiplied on the prophet and his descendants,
Especially on Akbar Shah, who rid this land of the Shia.[164]

As against the very brief mention of the main policies during the rule of successive Mughal subahdars, the text goes into detail about the awliya that came to Kashmir during Mughal rule, including the author's own spiritual guide, and their disciples. Quoting copiously from prominent Sufi mystic poets such as Rumi, Jami, and Nizami,[165] Shahabadi presents Mughal rule as the context for Kashmir's, as well as his own, spiritual coming of age.

Although the nature of the narration of Mughal rule depended on the time period when the text was composed, it is clear that for all the tarikhs discussed here, it was a means to reposition Kashmir in relation to the Mughal Empire. The tarikhs' description of actual Mughal rule was limited to a chronological discussion of the successive governors, the main events during their rule, and the visits of the Mughal emperors to the Valley. It was in their descriptions of the events leading up to the Mughal conquest and

the actual battles fought between Mughal and Kashmiri forces that these texts attempted to draw out the nature of the association that should exist between the Kashmiri nobility, its Sufi elders, and the Mughal Empire. Kashmir might have attained a territorial integrity as a result of its inclusion into the Mughal Empire, but the tarikhs asserted their right over defining how the entity itself would be imagined.

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Mughal rule certainly had an impact on the nature of the tarikh tradition in the Kashmiri context, particularly in terms of drawing Kashmir into the larger Indo-Persian literary world. The Mughal historiographical enterprise endowed the Sanskrit tradition with legitimacy and made it more readily available to a range of individuals interested in historical composition. Moreover, Mughal socio-economic policies and Indo-Persian literary narratives such as the *Ain-i Akbari* lent a territorial and symbolic coherence to the idea of Kashmir, thereby shaping the relationship between historical time and space within Kashmir's historical narratives.

This, of course, was not simply a result of the advent of Mughal rule, since, as we have seen, the indigenous narrative tradition itself had also played a significant role in drawing the contours of Kashmir as both a discursive and territorial space. The landscape was interwoven into the sacred and secular account of Kashmir's past in its Sanskrit and Persian texts, thereby rendering spaces central to these narratives. In the tarikhs that were composed during and after the Mughal period in Kashmir, historical events continued to be played out on particular, named spaces, which to an extent mediated the course of the narrative and the actors involved in it. At the same time, however, Kashmir's geography and sacred spaces took on a life of their own as distinct entities outside of the historical narrative, although still critical to its articulation. Sections at the beginning or end of most tarikhs lauded Kashmir's beautiful landscape and celebrated the awe-inspiring characteristics attached to its sacred spaces in the manner of chorographical writing.[166]

Tarikh-i Haider Malik, for instance, presents these spaces as a list of 'unique and wonderful things of the captivating country of Kashmir' towards the end of the narrative.[167] *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, similarly, ends with a brief section on Kashmir's geographical location and attributes, as well as a section on its forty-nine parganahs, their villages and revenue yields. This is accompanied by a description of *Ajayabat-i Kashmir*, or noteworthy places within Kashmir that had strange stories associated with particular springs and lakes located within them.[168] *Waqiat-i Kashmir* begins and ends with discussions of Kashmir's landscape, lauding its beautiful climate and other natural attributes in the beginning, while the final section of the text dwells on its special characteristics, embodied in its springs, lakes, caves, and fine crafts such as shawls.[169] *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, too, ends with a section on the beauty of Kashmir's landscape and its unique geographical characteristics, such as its sacred springs and lakes.[170]

The tarikhs, then, presented as well-established fact the idea that Kashmir was an Islamic space created through the activities of Sufi mystics, while giving voice to it as a political unit—and by the mid-eighteenth century a distinct region—with divinely endowed natural attributes that set it apart from territories around it. The central preoccupation of these texts, composed by individuals from across the social spectrum, was to record the past of this unit, both as a literary tradition and as a chronological record of its successive rulers and Sufi mystics. While temporality could not be pinned down to precise calendrical time in the former and was thus unimportant, for the latter it operated in specific historicized moments that could be local or universal. It was precisely the coexistence of these twin engagements with the past that allowed Kashmir's tarikhs to attain legitimacy and create an autonomous space within which to define Kashmir as a literary and political entity, and through this definition, negotiate its relationship to the Mughal Empire. Kashmir's Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions emerged as the arena on which the ideas of the past as tradition and the past as history were played out, as Kashmir's tarikhs situated themselves within, while also

distancing themselves from and attempting to redefine, the narrative tradition represented by earlier texts.

Whether they were narrating the advent of Islam, or the conquest by the Mughals, or the divisiveness amongst Kashmir's nobility, the tarikhs claimed the right to endow Kashmir with a variety of meanings. Kashmir thus emerged in these texts as a political unit within the Mughal Empire that was nevertheless located within a larger Islamic historical space that transcended the bounds of the Mughal imperial imagination. At the same time, it was the home of the inhabitants of Kashmir, identified by the late eighteenth century as a qaum. Far from being digested summaries of earlier Sanskrit narratives, or mere imitations of Persian and Indo-Persian narratives, Kashmir's tarikhs adopted fresh authorial voices to self-consciously endow historical production itself with new meanings in the context of Kashmir. Kashmir's political past, the past of its literary tradition, and the act of historical composition by individual historians that gave voice to these pasts, thus, entwined together within the tarikh tradition to retain Kashmir's narrative individuality and autonomy.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, new literary and linguistic ideas, political factors, and economic transformations came together to shape Kashmir's narrative tradition and the resultant articulation of the idea of Kashmir as a region. The following chapter discusses Persian historical narratives in the context of the emergence of writings in the Kashmiri vernacular, as well as the impact of European and colonial ideas on history and historiography on Kashmir's narrative landscape.

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[1] For a comprehensive discussion of the distinction between the past as tradition and as history, see Kaviraj, 'The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal', in Pollock (2003), pp. 507–10.

[2] Tarikhs were not the only Persian narratives being written in this period. There were a number of important tazkiras that were composed in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Kashmir. Examples include *Rishi Nama* by Baba Nasib, c. 1637; *Asrar-ul Abrar* by Baba Daud Mishkati, c. 1652–3; *Khawariq-us Salikin* by Mulla Ahmad bin Abdus Sabur, c. 1697–8; and *Futuhat-i Kubrawiya* by Abdul Wahab Nuri, c. 1748–9. See Rafiqi (2003), pp. 320–2. Unlike the texts discussed

in the earlier chapter, which focused on specific Sufi mystics and their orders in the context of inter-order competition, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tazkiras were collective biographies of the Sufi saints of Kashmir, which emphasized the blessed nature of its landscape that had drawn towards itself numerous mystical figures and had been transformed in the process by their combined activities.

[3] Bhatt (2008), esp. pp. 156–73.

[4] See, for instance, Sufi, 2 vols (1974); Parmu (1969). There is only one book solely devoted to the Mughal period in Kashmir, but it gives a very general overview of political conditions during the period. See Mattoo (1988).

[5] Hassnain, for instance, discusses Mughal rule in Kashmir as an example of 'Mughal Imperialism'. See Hassnain (2009), pp. 6–36.

[6] Parmu (1969), pp. 302–3.

[7] Mattoo (1988), p. 11; Hangloo (2000), p. 112.

[8] Parmu (1969), pp. 289–90; Hangloo (2000), p. 112.

[9] Hangloo (2000), pp. 111–15; Mattoo (1988), pp. 68–75.

[10] Mattoo (1988), pp. 86–8.

[11] Hangloo (2000), pp. 117–19.

[12] Inden, 'Kashmir as Paradise on Earth', in Rao (2008), pp. 548–52.

[13] Tikku (1971), p. 83.

[14] Ibid., p. 85.

[15] Ibid., pp. 94–5.

[16] On the centrality of Persian to the political culture of the Mughal Empire, see Alam (1998), pp. 317–49; Alam (2004), esp. Chapters 4 and 5.

[17] Mattoo (1988), p. 177.

[18] The formalization of Persian as the preferred literary language ensured that Kashmiri, which enjoyed a popular life as the spoken language and in the *vaakh*s of Lal Ded and the *shruk*s of Nund Rishi, mystics of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Kashmir respectively, did not emerge as a written language (with very few exceptions) until the late eighteenth century. Part of the explanation for this may lie in the fact that the Sarada script, which emerged in Kashmir in AD 700–800, and was specifically suited to the broken and half broken vowels of spoken Kashmiri, had declined with the increasing use of the Persian script by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. See Mattoo (1988), p. 174; Pandit, 'Medieval Kashmir Historiography' (unpublished paper), p. 14; on the origin of the Sarada script, see Deambi (1982).

[19] K. Chatterjee (2009a), pp. 149–50.

[20] K. Chatterjee (2009b), pp. 13, 48–53.

[21] Anooshahr (2006), p. 279.

[22] Ernst (2003), pp. 173–95; Ali (1992), pp. 38–45.

[23] Anooshahr (2006), p. 293.

[24] Fazl, trans. Blochmann, vol. II (2004), p. 844.

[25] Meisami (1999), p. 283.

[26] Roy, 'The Making of a Mandala', in Pati, Sahu, and Venkatasubramanian (2003), p. 55.

[27] J. C. Dutt, 2nd series (1986), p. 312.

[28] Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 9. It is noteworthy that Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the first Prime Minister of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, began his autobiography with three quotations, the first of which is this particular one based on Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*: 'Kashmir … By power of the spirit … yes. / By the power of the sword … never'. See Abdullah (1993).

[29] Fazl, trans. Blochmann, vol. II (2004), p. 844.

[30] Ibid., p. 847. *Baharistan-i Shahi*, discussed in the earlier chapter, claimed Shah Mir's descent from the ruling family of Swadgir (Swat). See Anon, trans. Pandit (1991), p. 16.

[31] Fazl, trans. Blochmann, vol. II (2004), p. 847.

[32] For a brief discussion of Abul Fazl's ideas on religion and history, see Siddiqi, 'Shaikh Abul Fazl', in Hasan (1968), pp. 123–41.

[33] Fazl, trans. Blochmann, vol. II (2004), p. 848.

[34] Fazl, trans. Blochmann, vol. II (2004), p. 829.

[35] Ibid., p. 831.

[36] Fazl, trans. Blochmann, vol. II (2004), p. 829.

[37] Ibid., pp. 832–3.

[38] As mentioned in Chapter 1, Mirza Haider Dughlat was Babur's cousin and the commander of the forces of Sultan Said Khan, ruler of Kashghar. In 1540, Dughlat descended into the Valley with a small force and took control of it almost immediately, thus becoming its de facto ruler for ten years. See Hasan (1959), pp. 125–44.

[39] Dughlat, trans. Ross (1973), pp. 424–32.

[40] Ibid., pp. 430–2.

[41] Ibid., pp. 432–4.

[42] Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), p. 266.

[43] Bano, 'Introduction', in Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. xii. See also, Ibrahim (1956a), pp. 25–6.

[44] Bano, 'Introduction', in Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. xii.

[45] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), pp. 94–7. Haider Malik did not retain the position of governor for long, since rivalries between his brother and a Mughal official ultimately led to the appointment of Dilawar Khan (a non-Kashmiri) as governor by Jahangir (p. 97).

[46] Ibid., p. 88.

[47] Khushbash (2009), pp. 33–4.

[48] For a discussion of the munshis of northern India, see Alam and Subrahmanyam (2004), pp. 61–72; Alam and Subrahmanyam (2010), pp. 393–423. For a discussion of the karanams of South India, see Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam (2001).

[49] Alam and Subrahmanyam (2010), p. 420.

[50] K. Chatterjee (2009b), Chapter 5.

[51] Bhatt (1978), pp. 459–60; Ibrahim (1956b), p. 118.

[52] Andrabi (2009), pp. 161–2; Sufi, vol. II (1974), p. 373.

[53] Bhatt (1978), p. 461; Khuihami, trans. Kabir (undated), p. 339.

[54] Ibrahim (1956b), p. 119.

[55] Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), pp. 13–14.

[56] The famous nineteenth-century historical narrative, *Tarikh-i Hassan*, drew heavily on *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, as we shall see in the next chapter. The same can be said for the well-recognized twentieth-century histories of Kashmir, such as Sufi (1974) [1949] and Bamzai (1962).

[57] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846]. That the Delhi College patronized this translation is not surprising, given that translation, particularly of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian books into Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali, was one of the central endeavours of the institution. Also, Sprenger conducted research on collections of literary biographies from various Indian cities in the 1840s and is likely to have come across a mention of Dyadmari and his text in one of these collections. See Chaghatai, 'Dr. Aloys Sprenger and the Delhi College', in Pernau (2006), p. 115; Bayly (1999), p. 195. The text's circulation in colonial India is evident from the fact that in *Tarikh-i Makhzan-i Punjab* (1877), for instance, which Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Qureshi wrote on the order of the government of Punjab, he notes in the section

on Kashmir that he had drawn his information from Dyadmari's history. See Khan (2005), p. 445.

[58] Kondoo, 'Taruf', in Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), p. xxxv.

[59] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 382–7ff.

[60] Ibid., pp. 356–419ff.

[61] Khuihami, trans. Kabir (undated), p. 93.

[62] Kaviraj, 'Two Histories of Literary Culture', in Pollock (2003), pp. 509–10.

[63] Pollock has argued that Sanskrit intellectual thought in the pre-modern period saw itself as existing 'outside of time'. As a result, the authors and participants in this discourse remained unnamed and unimportant: 'All intellectual generations, disembedded from any spatio-temporal framework, were thought of as coexistent: the past was a very present conversation partner'. Pollock (2001b), p. 7.

[64] Kaviraj, 'Two Histories of Literary Culture', in Pollock (2003), pp. 509–10.

[65] As Pollock demonstrates, seventeenth-century Sanskrit intellectuals too were becoming concerned with periodization, change, and historicity in literary culture, although this did not lead to the adoption of a new method or ontology. Pollock (2001b), pp. 11–19.

[66] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 2.

[67] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991). As Bayly has pointed out, the Mughals were intensely interested in the genealogies of their administrators, because genealogy encapsulated human qualities and therefore was a means for the Mughals to 'know' the territories they had acquired. See Bayly (1999), pp. 25–6.

[68] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 2.

[69] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 3.

[70] Ibid., pp. 3–4.

[71] Ajiz (1710), pp. 4ff.

[72] Narayan Koul himself, of course, as a karkun, stood in the position of being able to read these texts in Sanskrit. That Kashmiri Pandits used both Persian and Sanskrit in administrative and scholarly transactions is evident from a late-seventeenth-century deed of sale of a Mahabharata manuscript that was recorded in Sanskrit (Sarada script) and Persian and signed by several Kashmiri Pandits. This deed of sale was part of a larger administrative and legal compendium, entitled *Lokaprakasha*, which served as a source of reference for karkuns. The deeds, acts, and glossaries within this compendium were written in a variety of languages and scripts, including Sarada and Persian, with some manuscripts

displaying a curious admixture of the two scripts. See Stein (1900), pp. 187–94; Shastri (1947); Bloch (1914).

[73] Ajiz (1710), pp. 4ff.

[74] Ibid., pp. 3–4ff.

[75] Ibid., pp. 5ff.

[76] Ibid., pp. 6ff.

[77] Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), pp. 13–14.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., p. 51.

[80] Ibid., p. 14.

[81] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], p. 80.

[82] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], pp. 105–6.

[83] Sukh Jeewan Mal, a *khattri* born in Kabul whose family hailed from the Punjab, rose in the ranks of the Afghan ruler Ahmed Shah Abdali's administration in the early eighteenth century and was appointed governor of Kashmir in 1753. Seeing that Abdali was increasingly embroiled in battles with the Sikhs in the Punjab, Sukh Jeewan Mal began to assert his independence, proclaiming the Mughal emperor, Alamgir II, as his sovereign, and receiving in exchange a title of Raja from him. He was eventually defeated by Abdali in 1762 with the help of the ruler of Jammu, and trampled to death by horses. While in power, Sukh Jeewan Mal, who was a great patron of literature in Kashmir, deputed a group of Kashmiri poets, headed by Mulla Muhammad 'Taufiq', to compose the history of Kashmir entirely in Persian verse in the tradition of Firdausi's *Shahnama*. An entire office was created for the task, with each poet being given ten assistants and several munshis to assist in the composition. See Parmu (1969), pp. 354–9; Taufiq Kashmiri, '*Shahnama-i Kashmir*' (undated), pp. 235–7; Parmu (1969), pp. 354–9; Tikku (1971), pp. 160–89.

[84] Tikku (1971), p. 180.

[85] Ibid., p. 168.

[86] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 2.

[87] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 16.

[88] Ibid., p. 17.

[89] Ibid., p. 23.

[90] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), pp. 23–4.

[91] Ibid., p. 33.

[92] Ibid., pp. 33–5.

[93] Ibid., p. 40.

[94] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), pp. 53–4.

[95] Ibid., pp. 54–5.

[96] Ibid., p. 1.

[97] Ibid., p. 2.

[98] Ibid., p. 101.

[99] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), pp. 101–4.

[100] Ajiz (1710), pp. 8–60ff.

[101] Ibid., pp. 62ff.

[102] Fazl, trans. Blochmann, vol. II (2004), p. 847.

[103] Ajiz (1710), pp. 65ff.

[104] Ajiz (1710), pp. 66–8ff.

[105] Ibid., pp. 69–72ff.

[106] J. C. Dutt, vol. III (1990) [1898], p. 57.

[107] Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), pp. 16–22.

[108] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], pp. 6–7.

[109] Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), p. 16.

[110] Ibid., p. 10.

[111] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], p. 8.

[112] Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), p. 18.

[113] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], p. 80; Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), pp. 13–15.

[114] Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), p. 462.

[115] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], pp. 82–3.

[116] Ibid., p. 99.

[117] Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), p. 14.

[118] For a discussion of the political conditions in Kashmir during this period, see Parmu (1969), pp. 339–45. As Bayly has argued in the context of the North Indian ecumene, ‘The disintegration of the Mughal Empire after 1700 set the scene for the sharpening of debates between Sunnis, Shias and Hindus’. See Bayly (1999), p. 189.

[119] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], pp. 278–85.

[120] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 1–7ff.

[121] Ibid., pp. 7–10ff.

[122] Ibid., pp. 10–11ff.

[123] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 11–12ff.

[124] Ibid., pp. 419ff.

[125] Ibid., pp. 478ff.

[126] Ibid., pp. 47–101ff.

[127] Ibid., pp. 141ff.

[128] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 136ff.

[129] Ibid., pp. 136–9, 173ff.

[130] Ibid., pp. 177–98ff.

[131] Ibid., pp. 157–62ff.

[132] Ibid., pp. 146–9ff. Shahabadi attributes the destruction of the temple at Parahaspura to Sultan Sikandar, which was followed, according to him, by the discovery of a chest from its ruins containing a note prophesying that a man named Sikandar would destroy the temple. *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* relates a similar story, which is discussed later in this chapter; however, in that the destruction of the Parahaspura temple is attributed to Shamsuddin Iraqi and the prophecy revealed from its ruins not only states that Iraqi would destroy the temple, but also that Chak rule over Kashmir would be replaced by that of the Mughals. That Shahabadi did not attribute this event to Iraqi is unsurprising, given his antipathy towards the Nurbakhshiya sect and Shias in general.

[133] The incorporation of Kashmir into Ahmed Shah Abdali's empire centred in Kabul in 1753 exacerbated the role of governors and local intermediaries in determining the course of politics in Kashmir. While some Afghan governors saw Kashmir as a rich trove of treasures to take back to Kabul to enhance their own position in the Afghan court, others saw the Valley as their own kingdom where they could assert their autonomy from Kabul. The steady rise of Kashmiri Pandits within the administration continued during this period as several prominent individuals attained high positions under Afghan governors, some even serving in Kabul. See Parmu (1969), pp. 351–2; Kilam (1955), pp. 242–3.

[134] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 463ff.

[135] The only Afghan governor presented by the text in a positive light is Sukh Jeewan Mal; however, Shahabadi attributes his good qualities to the fact that he

converted to Islam and accepted a Sufi mystic from Kashmir as his spiritual guide. Ibid., pp. 465ff.

[136] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 482–3ff.

[137] Ibid., pp. 305ff.

[138] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 101.

[139] Ibid., p. 104.

[140] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 84.

[141] Sayyid Ali, trans. Jan (2009), p. 47.

[142] Ibid., pp. 48–50.

[143] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 69. This incident can be found in several subsequent histories of Kashmir and appears to have little basis in reality. In the introduction to his translation of *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, Ross notes that Mirza Haider was most likely killed by the accidental discharge of an arrow in the darkness by one of his own men. See Ross, 'Introduction', in Dughlat, trans. Ross (1973), p. 22.

[144] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 83.

[145] Ibid., pp. 89–90.

[146] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), p. 90.

[147] Anon., trans. Pandit (1991), p. 266.

[148] Ajiz (1710), pp. 72–88ff.

[149] Ibid., pp. 101ff.

[150] Ibid., pp. 109–25ff.

[151] Ajiz (1710), pp. 121ff.

[152] Ibid., pp. 125ff.

[153] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], pp. 287–8.

[154] Ibid., pp. 327–8.

[155] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], pp. 151–3, 172–8.

[156] Ibid., pp. 178.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid., p. 332.

[159] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 218–19ff.

[160] Ibid., pp. 219ff.

[161] Ibid., pp. 247–8ff.

[162] Ibid., pp. 275ff.

[163] Ibid., pp. 277ff.

[164] Ibid., pp. 322–9ff.

[165] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 356–419ff.

[166] Chorography has been defined as ‘a mode of description in which truth to the individuality, personality and uniqueness of a place or region was the goal’. See Cosgrove (2008), pp. 7, 17. Helgerson defines chorography as the ‘genre devoted to place’. See Helgerson (1986), p. 72.

[167] Chadurah, trans. Bano (1991), pp. 99–100.

[168] Ajiz (1710), pp. 126–30ff.

[169] Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], pp. 332–56.

[170] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 306–12ff.

3

VERNACULAR HISTORIES

Narration and Practice in Kashmir's Nineteenth-Century Historiographical Tradition

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Persian *tarikh* was an integral part of Kashmir's narrative tradition. Emerging in the context of and influenced by the Indo-Persian tarikh tradition, Kashmir's tarikhs were nonetheless vernacular texts in that they saw themselves as heirs to, even as they specifically engaged with, the indigenous Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions. In the process, these prose and verse texts encompassing a variety of genres claimed the right to draw the contours of Kashmir as a sacred space and territorial entity, through a picturesque and factual narration of its sacred and temporal past, thereby laying down the features of a Kashmiri historicity. Even as Kashmir became a part of multiple political entities through the course of the nineteenth century, and orientalist researchers began to turn their attention to its classical past through a study of its Sanskrit texts (discussed at length in the next chapter), the indigenous tarikh tradition continued its own parallel engagement with Kashmir's literary past. While in some ways the nineteenth-century historical narratives became more precise and literal in recounting the past as fact, they continued to exhibit a distinct historicist mode as they remained comfortably and self-consciously ensconced within Kashmir's long narrative tradition.

For the rich and varied scholarship on ideas of history and historiography in nineteenth-century India,[1] the colonial historical method often emerges as the critical reference point. This

scholarship, which has made significant contributions to our understanding of the heterogeneity of pre-colonial and colonial 'regimes of historicity', is especially interested in studying how individuals and communities in South Asian regions engaged with and rethought the colonial historical method in vernacular writings. The term vernacular itself has come to encompass historical writings in regional languages (usually assumed to be native to the regions), but more significantly, as Partha Chatterjee has persuasively argued, they are writings that express 'their difference from the authorized forms of modern (colonial and postcolonial) academic history'.[2] In most regions of British India, such writings emerged in the institutional context of the professionalization of history as an academic discipline, as colonial educational reform led to the establishment of universities and colleges with history departments and a rethinking of educational curricula in general.[3] The rise of a vernacular print culture and the professionalization of history provided the arena for debates among a multiplicity of individuals and groups in the regions about the content and style of historical narration as they attempted to negotiate, among other things, the relationship between the region and the nation.[4]

An examination of Persian historical narratives from nineteenth-century Kashmir, where the linguistic ecology was more complex—thereby contributing in part to the absence of the professionalization of history—yields rather different insights into historical practice in nineteenth-century South Asia. The Sikh and Dogra states patronized Persian as the court and literary language until the last decade of the nineteenth century. As a result, Persian historical narratives continued to be produced by the same groups of individuals, such as *pir*s and minor gentry, as in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and played a critical role in keeping alive the Persian literary and manuscript tradition of Kashmir in an era of print culture. By the late eighteenth century, however, these groups had also begun to use Kashmiri, the regional vernacular, as the language of poetry and storytelling, thereby defining it as the language of the people. In addition, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, the new Urdu vernacular literature was beginning to filter into Kashmir due to the strengthening of political

links between the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and the British Punjab. The critical role played by the interactions among these distinct and unequal vernaculars in shaping nineteenth-century Kashmir's historical culture suggests the need to broaden our understanding of the meanings of history in the vernacular. In particular, we need to move beyond an emphasis on singular vernacular languages tied to particular regions that functioned as repositories of the vernacular/popular in strict opposition to the academic/professional.[5]

Nineteenth-century Kashmir's tarikh tradition derived its vernacularity not from an opposition to academic history or the colonial historical method, but rather from its composition, as earlier, in Persian, which was now in closer conversation with Kashmiri and Urdu. Unlike most other histories written in this period in regional languages, which sought to distance themselves from pre-modern narratives in the wake of modern history, Kashmir's narratives unselfconsciously incorporated earlier 'mythic' modes of narration as they framed Kashmir's political, spiritual, and now, also its literary past. Composed in a period when the political contours of Kashmir were redrawn multiple times through its association with a series of larger imperial entities, the Persian tarikhs attempted to retain the region's singularity and continuity by remaining anchored to pre-existing narrative tropes of place, now cast in a new historical idiom. The past as history and as tradition thus blended more seamlessly in these texts as tradition too came to be historically located within Kashmir's past. At its core, the nineteenth-century historical tradition was concerned with defining and repositioning Kashmir as a polity within a more global context by presenting its people—Kashmiris, and by the late nineteenth century, Kashmiri Muslims—as a political community.

This chapter is primarily concerned with the examination of four textual narratives—three Persian tarikhs and one Urdu tarikh—as they engaged with textual and oral narrative traditions in multiple languages, responded to new orientalist ideas on the authenticity of texts and sources, and thus actively participated in the startling transformations on Kashmir's socio-political and cultural landscapes. They carried out these multiple interventions while reaffirming a

historical mode that was distinct from modern, conventional history-writing during this period. These texts include Birbal Kachru's *Tarikh-i Kashmir Birbal Kachru* (1846); Ghulam Muhammad Nabi Shah Khanyari's *Wajiz ul-Tawarikh* (Summary of History), which was written in the late 1850s; *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir* by Pandit Hargopal Kaul Khasta (1877), written in Urdu; and Pir Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami's *Tarikh-i Hassan* (1880s). A later chapter will consider the circulation of the content and ideas within these and earlier textual narratives through Kashmir's narrative sphere.

Language, Literature, and Historical Production in Nineteenth-Century Kashmir

Rather than declining as it did in the early years of the nineteenth century in the rest of India, Persian flourished throughout the century in Kashmir, albeit in a somewhat transformed linguistic climate. The nineteenth century was the most fertile period for the composition of Persian historical narratives in Kashmir; as many as fifteen such texts were composed in this period, and they were mostly histories of Kashmir. Others were histories of the Prophet of Islam and his companions, and a few narrated the past of the Dogra dynasty and the reign of the first Dogra ruler, Gulab Singh.[6] This is not surprising given that despite the passage of Kashmir from Afghan to Sikh rule in 1819, followed by Dogra rule in 1846, Persian remained as the administrative language of Kashmir under the two regimes until the end of the nineteenth century.[7] Moreover, both the Sikh and Dogra courts—the former centred at Lahore and the latter in Srinagar—were patrons of the Indo-Persian literary and historiographical traditions.

Most significantly, the Dogras made no attempt at reforming the system of traditional education that was practiced in Kashmir until the turn of the twentieth century. As a result, *makhtab*s continued to impart basic education in Persian to a wide cross-section of society, with members of minor theological classes—who practised occupations such as such as village pir, *hakim* (healer), or *mullah* (teacher), sometimes in tandem—gaining a higher level of linguistic

accomplishment through their association with prominent Sufi hospices. Despite the resumption of their *jagir*s under Sikh rule, such individuals continued their involvement with the higher Persian literary sphere, and composed a variety of verse and prose narratives in the nineteenth century.

Mullah Hamidullah Shahabadi (d. 1848) stands out as one of the most prominent of these individuals. Both a school teacher and a theologian, he wrote several treatises in Persian on the degraded state of Kashmir as mulk under the Afghans and Sikhs, such as *Babujnama* (A History of Injustice). He also penned a lengthy *masnavi*, *Akbarnama* (1844), which he wrote as a challenge to a group of Kashmiri elders who, in his dream, had declared the art of Persian poetry to be dead in Kashmir.[8] Invoking Firdausi's relationship to Mahmud of Ghazni, he also declared that his purpose for writing the epic—which details the Sikh-Afghan and Anglo-Afghan wars that took place during Shahabadi's lifetime and presents the Afghan prince Akbar Khan as a hero—was not to receive 'a handful of gold'.[9] He was thus pointing to the fact that he had loftier motivations for composing the epic poem than mere financial compensation.

At the same time, Kashmiri Pandits distinguished themselves in Persian belles-letters and kept alive a tradition of classical Persian learning and scholarship from a fairly well-maintained economic position, through their association with the administration.[10] Pandit Birbal Kachru (1795–1865), the author of *Tarikh-i Kashmir Birbal Kachru*, discussed in this chapter, hailed from a prominent Kashmiri Pandit family of *karkun*s and Persian poets, and was himself a noted Persian scholar and poet of his age. Not only did two pre-eminent poets of the Afghan period, Bhawani Das Kachru and Damodar Kachru belong to his family, but his own father, Dayaram Kachru 'Khushdil' (1743–1811), was a great Persian poet and served as *mir munshi* under the Afghan rulers in both Kabul and Srinagar.[11] Under the tutelage of his father, Kachru received a broad education in Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic, and as is clear from even a cursory perusal of his history, this included a study of the religious texts of Islam in Arabic, Persian classics, Persian Indo-Islamic texts, as well

as Sanskrit texts from Kashmir and India.[12] Besides the history, Kachru penned several masnavis and ghazals under the pen name ‘Varasta’, which demonstrate his belief in monism and the existence of the divine in a variety of forms (this idea also appears repeatedly in the history).[13] It is most likely that he was employed by the Afghan, and later the Sikh, governors of Kashmir as an administrator, but there is no concrete proof of this.[14]

Individuals from Pandit administrative and Muslim theological classes also became crucial to the simultaneous emergence of Kashmiri as a textual language. Circulating primarily within the oral sphere until the latter half of the eighteenth century, by the turn of the nineteenth century, Kashmiri poetry in masnavi form was being written in earnest in the Persian script. In part this can be seen as an aspect of the more general trend in the subcontinent towards regional vernaculars, such as Hindavi/Urdu, as favoured literary languages, which emerged in the wake of Mughal decline. The trend illustrated the rise of regional idioms in response to the Persianized culture of the Mughal centre.[15] In Kashmir, the composition of Kashmiri verse coincided with the transition from Mughal to Afghan rule, and the emergence of the idea of Kashmir as a distinct mulk and its people as a *qaum*, as articulated by the eighteenth-century tarikhs discussed in the last chapter. Although the language was denied patronage by the Afghans, low-level administrators and pirs began to translate Persian classics into Kashmiri and compose mystical poetry in the language. Kashmiri had languished as a written language not only due to the emphasis on Persian as the literary language, but also because of the widespread use of the Persian script. This had led to the decline of the Sarada script, which had been created specifically to suit Kashmiri’s vowel system. The adoption of the Persian script to record Kashmiri thus allowed for its re-emergence as a textual language. A vernacular print culture in Kashmiri, however, did not take hold in Kashmir until the very end of the nineteenth century.

The Kashmiri verse composed in this period was primarily of three kinds: First, and largely, it consisted of translations and adaptations of Persian classics, such as *Shirin-Khusrao* by Nizami

Ganjvi, *Yusuf-Zuleikha* by Abdur Rahman Jami, and Firdausi's *Shahnama*; second, it consisted of folk stories and incidents from the Kashmiri, Sanskrit, and Persian textual and oral traditions recast into Kashmiri; and third, it consisted of *Naat* (eulogies of the Prophet) and other topics drawn from the history of Islam, such as *razmiya*, or combat poetry, that recounted the battles fought by the prophet, or in the case of Kashmiri Pandits, Kashmiri translations of the Bhagavad Gita and the Ramayana.[16] In many cases, the Kashmiri poetic renditions of Persian classics and Kashmiri verse in general drew on Kashmiri folk styles and forms of narration (such as the Kashmiri songs *vakhun*, *chakri*, and *roph*).[17] In addition, this was the period when moves were made to collect and textually record the *vaakh*s and *shruk*s of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century mystics, Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, which were considered early examples of Kashmiri verse. This in turn influenced the composition of historical narratives and the Kashmiri poetry of individuals such as Mahmud Gami, Parmanand, and Wahab Pare.[18]

Mahmud Gami (1765–1855), from a pir family of Southern Kashmir, who wrote prolifically in Kashmiri, was especially adept at adapting Kashmiri folk songs and musical styles, writing his verses in metres that could be set to music.[19] His early education was in Persian and Arabic and as a young man he tried his hand at Persian poetry, ultimately turning to composing entirely in Kashmiri, using Persian as a source language to enrich his Kashmiri compositions.[20] Thus Kashmiri poetry became an embodiment of the transactions among multilingual literary traditions, transforming the linguistic and literary landscapes of Kashmir in significant ways. Persian retained its position as the language of prose narratives, such as the histories under consideration here, while Kashmiri became the language of poetry, storytelling, and by the end of the nineteenth century, satire and protest against the myriad tyrannies suffered by common Kashmiris.[21] Poets such as Maqbool Shah Kraalwari wrote stinging poems in Kashmiri about the lives of peasants, the atrocities of revenue collectors, and even the superstitions peddled by pirs in the countryside.[22] Another prominent nineteenth-century Kashmiri poet, Wahab Pare, who adapted and translated Firdausi's

Shahnama into Kashmiri, and to which he added a short section on the history of Chaks, Afghans, and Dogras in Kashmir, wrote a narrative poem entitled *Darveshi* (c. 1880) that stridently critiqued Dogra rule for its tyranny and rapacity.[23]

The life of Pir Hassan Shah Khuihami, a member of the minor theological classes of Kashmir engaged in Persian letters and the author of *Tarikh-i Hassan*, another text discussed in this chapter, encapsulates the continuities within Kashmir's narrative tradition and the transformations that it had undergone by the late nineteenth century. Hassan (1833–98) was born in the village of Gamru in Northwest Kashmir, to a family of pir hakims with a long tradition of learning and piety, not unlike the Persian literati discussed in earlier chapters. His father, Ghulam Rasool Shaiwa, was a scholar of Persian and Arabic, as well as steeped in the tradition of Muslim mysticism and literature. The family traced its descent from a Pandit, Ganesh Koul Dattatraya (later Ghaziuddin Koul), who converted to Islam at the behest of Shaikh Hamza Makhdum in 1576. One of his ancestors, Sheikh Muhammad Fazil (d. 1737), a saint of some repute, received a jagir from the Mughals and settled in the Zoonimar locality of Srinagar, but the family moved to Gamru in the early nineteenth century after the confiscation of their jagir by the Sikhs.[24]

Raised in Gamru, Hassan was trained in Persian and Arabic by his father (who was an accomplished Persian poet) and later acquired knowledge of *Tib* (Greek medicine) to practice the family profession of pir hakim. He recognized Shaykh Hamza Makhdum as his religious preceptor and was later initiated into the Naqshbandiya Sufi order. During his lifetime, he travelled extensively through Afghanistan and the Punjab, meeting with Sufi *shaykh*s, scholars, and other great individuals of his age. During his travels, he also collected a variety of manuscripts, including a rare Persian translation of a Sanskrit text from Kashmir entitled *Ratnakar Purana*, which he would later utilize to compose *Tarikh-i Hassan*.

Hassan's writings, which besides the history include *Gulistan-i Ikhlaq* (1866), a long didactic poem; *Kharita-i Asrar* (1869), a compilation of almanacs, astrology, and medicine; and *Aijaz-i Ghariba* (1882), a long poem describing the miracles of the

prophet,[25] reflected his own diverse interests that lay at the intersection of the spiritual and the secular. Moreover, these texts, some of which were written in a mixture of Persian and Kashmiri, illustrate the author's equal facility with both languages and reflect the changing linguistic ecology of Kashmir. At the same time, it is significant that Hassan chose to compose the historical narrative, *Tarikh-i Hassan*, entirely in Persian as late as the 1880s, indicating that Kashmiri print culture had not yet established itself in Kashmir, although Persian itself was on the wane and was soon to be replaced by Urdu as the language of administration.

Hassan wrote a Kashmiri–Persian verse for presentation to the Dogra Prime Minister, Anant Ram, during the 1875–76 famine in Kashmir. This long poem described the terrible plight suffered by the rural Kashmiri masses during the calamity, and offered suggestions to the government for a rectification of the situation. Surprisingly, the poem (amidst more general protest) had the desired effect as the Maharaja ordered the removal of Wazir Pannu as the Governor of Kashmir (the protests had clearly alluded to his culpability in compounding people's distress during the famine), and instituted relief measures to alleviate people's misery.[26] This introduced Hassan to the Dogra court, which later recommended him as a guide to Walter Lawrence, the Settlement Commissioner of Kashmir. Hassan not only introduced Lawrence to rural life, agricultural conditions, and the Kashmiri peasantry, but also taught him about Kashmiri language and history.[27] Their mutual influence on each other's writing is evident in *Tarikh-i Hassan* (discussed below) and *The Valley of Kashmir* (1895), in which Lawrence wrote a chapter on Kashmir's history based entirely on oral sources, or as he called it, 'common talk of the countryside'.[28]

Thus, the Persian narratives discussed here were composed in a literary milieu in which Persian and Kashmiri were becoming intimately linked through the adaptation of indigenous Persian narratives and Persian texts from Hindustan and Persia, both oral and written, into Kashmiri. The authors of the Persian narratives, in turn, now had a Kashmiri literary repertoire, besides the Sanskrit and Persian traditions, to draw on. This also allowed for an

interfertilization among folk, oral, and written texts, a point to be discussed at length in a later chapter. Besides these indigenous influences, one has to note the impact of Urdu texts and English books, mostly from the Punjab, on the composition of Persian historical narratives, particularly in the latter half of the century. This was, of course, the result of the opening up of Kashmir to British officials and European travellers, and the growing official and unofficial connections between the politics of Kashmir and the Punjab.

The author of the only nineteenth-century history of Kashmir in Urdu (*Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*), Hargopal Kaul Khasta (1848–1922), bears testament to the close, yet strained, relationship between Kashmir and the Punjab, a relationship that became stronger with the emergence of Jammu and Kashmir as a princely state. Khasta belonged to a Kashmiri Pandit family from Rainawari locality in Srinagar that had migrated from Kashmir to Lahore for government service during the Sikh period in Kashmir. His father, Ramachandra Kaul, maintained households in both Srinagar and Lahore, and it is likely that Khasta was born in Kashmir, since he calls it his *janam bhoomi* (land of birth). However, he was raised and educated in Lahore, and later moved with his family to Patiala.[29] Khasta himself held a government position in Shimla, where, by his own admission, the mountains invoked in him a deep nostalgia and an intense desire to return to the land of his birth—Kashmir—which he did in the company of his relatives. As he wrote, ‘One’s own land is better than the kingdom of Solomon / The thorns of one’s own land are better than the Sombal flowers of an alien land’.[30]

Soon after Khasta’s return to Kashmir, he was introduced by the British Resident to Maharaja Ranbir Singh, who appointed him a member of his private staff. He was responsible for reading out newspapers to the Maharaja every evening and thus developed a close relationship with the ruler. It was during this time that he wrote *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*. However, soon after the famine of 1876, the relationship foundered on rumours that Khasta was a British agent who had been planted within the administration to keep an eye on the activities of the Maharaja. He was accused of giving false information to British authorities about the Dogra government’s

response to the famine, leading to accusations against the Maharaja of atrocities such as the drowning of famine victims in the river Jhelum. When confronted by the Maharaja, Khasta refused to accept the charge that he was a spy, and was thrown in prison along with his brother.[31] After his release, he moved to Sialkot and returned to Kashmir only after Ranbir Singh's death.

He then appears to have become embroiled in another controversy; a late nineteenth-century Kashmiri broadside places him at the centre of an incident in which he insulted the Quran by ordering a *moulvi* (school teacher) to cease its loud recitation, ultimately throwing the holy book to the ground when the moulvi refused to comply. As a result, a deputation of Kashmiri Muslims went to the Resident of Jammu and Kashmir to plead for his expulsion from the state.[32] Although Khasta had been acquitted of the charge of insulting the Quran, the Resident expelled him from the territories of the Maharaja.[33] This time he retreated to Amritsar and became active in founding two newspapers that reported on Kashmir and actively advocated the return of full powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh by the British government. Eventually Khasta returned yet again to Kashmir, where he spent the rest of his life promoting social and educational reform within the Kashmiri Pandit community.[34]

It is apparent from the above discussion that Khasta was well positioned to compose a history of Kashmir. He had access to government documents and records, as well as to Sanskrit scholars, such as Pandit Damodar (who had written a summary of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*), to provide him with an understanding of the Sanskrit and Persian historical narratives of Kashmir. Additionally, the Director of Education of Punjab had pre-ordered two hundred copies of the book, which was published by Arya Press, Lahore, in 1877.[35] He was thus part of the burgeoning new vernacular print culture in the Punjab that was increasingly bringing together the politics of the Punjab and Kashmir in multifarious ways. The text, accordingly, not only reflects the political and linguistic relationships between India and Kashmir, but it also attempts to recast and refract them onto Kashmir's past.

Nineteenth-century Kashmir's tarikhs thus lay at the intersection of a variety of linguistic currents and ideological influences. Despite that, one cannot regard these texts as unique within Kashmir's narrative tradition. By engaging with the past as both tradition and history, earlier Persian narratives had drawn the contours of the region in the context of its narrative and historiographical tradition. The nineteenth-century narratives, as a result, accepted both—the region and its historical tradition—as natural, interconnected, facts. Furthermore, since these texts were not written within the context of history as a professional discipline, their authors did not feel the need to draw a stark distinction between pre-modern and modern historical sensibilities, both of which co-existed happily within them. The vernacularity of these texts thus drew not from their articulation of an opposition to academic/colonial history or their status as custodians of popular memory. Rather, it came from their location within and celebration of a distinctly Kashmiri historical mode that was simultaneously picturesque/literary and factual/historical. By not, in practice, recognizing differences between history and memory as legitimate forms of engaging with the past, or between written texts and oral stories in a variety of languages as legitimate sources with which to reconstruct it, the nineteenth-century tarikhs embraced Kashmir's narrative tradition, even as they set about giving its contours a definite shape.

The Art and Craft of Historical Composition

The nineteenth-century narratives from Kashmir display a remarkable level of comfort with the act of historical composition. Rather than lamenting the absence of a tradition of historical composition or historical sources, as one finds in historical discourse in other parts of India in this period, the texts expounded on the surfeit of sources and an established tradition available to them towards this endeavour. There is a palpable sense within them that they were the heirs to a multilingual tradition of historical narration that had taken a variety of forms, each of which served specific purposes depending on the taste of the times, and continued to retain a place in contemporary historical writing. The mid-

nineteenth-century texts made little attempt to assert their distinctiveness from earlier texts, although historical tradition itself was marked by a greater degree of temporality than in earlier texts, even as the tarikhs themselves adopted a more factual idiom in organizing the narrative of Kashmir's past.

Written in ornamental Persian prose, interspersed with Persian poetry, and clearly meant to be read and received as a piece of Persian literature par excellence,[36] *Tarikh-i Kashmir Birbal Kachru* is one of the few nineteenth-century tarikhs from Kashmir that located itself within a tradition of Indo-Persian chronicles represented by texts such as the *Akbarnama*. Kachru, who came from a family of karkuns and was most likely one himself, hailed Abul Fazl's narrative as having taken prose writing to new heights,[37] a style he himself clearly sought to emulate. He also utilized it as a source through the text, particularly in the discussion of the Mughal period. Hailing Emperor Akbar's contributions towards the enterprise of history-writing in detail, the text notes:

> When Akbar badshah ascended the throne, he wanted to learn about the conditions and rulers of the past. Towards that end, he ordered the examination of books in many languages and scripts. Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic books were collected and studied to understand the history of Islam, as well as other religious groups. Thus the period of his rule was more fruitful than earlier periods for the composition of histories.[38]

Nonetheless, the text traced its line of descent from the indigenous tradition of historical composition. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, thus, retains its pride of place in the text for being the very first history of Kashmir that recorded its past from its inception as Satisar, to almost the end of the rule of Hindu kings.

According to Kachru, Kalhana was followed by other Sanskrit historians until the advent of Mughal rule, and then those that wrote in Persian, such as Haider Malik Chadurah during the reign of Jahangir, Narayan Koul Ajiz during the reign of Muhammad Shah, and Khwaja Azam Dyadmari. Unlike in earlier tarikhs, these texts did not exist in the atemporal realm of tradition, as the text notes their precise dates of composition (in *hijri*), and in some cases, the names of their authors' royal patrons. Further, Kachru comments on

the historical value of the texts themselves, specifically noting that Dyadmari's history was devoted in large part to discussing the lives of Sufi saints and poets, thereby not revealing the full reality of Kashmir's past.[39] Thus, notes Kachru, 'Past historians have not written the complete truth and strayed from the path of truth in recounting the past'.[40] However, he adds a significant caveat that acknowledges that writers of every age had written history in their own way, in their own language, and their own script. He likens the movement of history to the life cycle of the individual, from birth to death, since history too, much like the individual, had to return to God. Since he was himself approaching death, he states that he decided to write down what was already written on the tablet of his heart—the history of Kashmir—thus merging his own life with that of Kashmir.[41]

It is apparent that for Kachru, history-writing was hardly a novel enterprise, but rather a well-established endeavour—both an art defined by tradition and literary style, and a craft that depended on sources. Accordingly, he recognized the indispensability of sources, particularly their accessibility, for the success of the endeavour. In a discussion of some of his sources towards the end of the narrative, he writes that a perusal of past histories allowed one to not only gain an understanding of the lives of those who would otherwise have remained silent, but also endowed one with a sense of the writing style of the authors of these texts. Other than the Mahabharata, which he labels as an ancient history of the Hindu qaum, and with which he begins his list of histories, all other texts in Kachru's list are Persian narratives, including Firdausi's *Shahnama*, Sarafuddin Yazdi's *Zafarnama*, and not surprisingly, Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*.[42]

Self-consciously recognizing the art and craft of history-writing, Kachru moreover saw one of its primary purposes as being the transmission of the idea that power, wealth, status, and even love, were merely transient. As a result, attachment to life and its material accoutrements was tantamount to utter folly. This sentiment, echoed time and again in the Sanskrit narratives by Kalhana and his successors, not to mention the Persian narratives from Kashmir, Persia, and Hindustan, remains central to Kachru's text. He

describes *duniya* (life, the world) as a faithless woman or a bride whose love for the individual rarely lasted forever: 'The bride (life) pulls a thousand bridegrooms towards her / but alas, her foundation is based on dissension (*fitna*) and disloyalty.'[43] Further, he uses the analogy of Persian love tales, such as *Shirin-Farhad* and *Laila-Majnun* (that were very much a part of both the Persian and Kashmiri language repertoires by this point), to argue that the love between an individual and duniya is doomed like that of the famous star-crossed lovers.[44] Indeed, he ends the history with a short verse on precisely this idea: 'A real man does not form attachments with this life, / Life is an ocean of sorrows. / Locate the shore in this tumultuous life, / The real man is one who finds this shore.'[45]

Tarikh-i Kashmir Birbal Kachru not only drew on Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic sources, but it is also replete with tropes from the oral traditions of Kashmir, which it validates as acceptable sources for a reconstruction of Kashmir's past. This is especially evident in the text's lengthy descriptions of the lives of the indigenous mystics, Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, who are presented as legitimate historical characters based on the oral traditions related to them as well as their own verses. These traditions linked the two figures to Kashmir's landscape, thereby allowing the text to reclaim them as autochthonous. The text details the story of Nund Rishi's birth which, it notes, took place in AH 779, as follows:

> Nund Rishi's mother, Sadr Meiji, was unable to bear a child for a number of years. A pious Brahman advised her to go to the chashma [spring] Gautam Nag in parganah Martand from where she was to retrieve a flower that grew on its banks and smell it. This, he said, would lead her to beget a pure child who would be named Nund, or the beautiful one. Sadr Meiji followed the Brahman's directives and Nund Rishi was born, but he refused to take his mother's milk. One day a kind woman of pure heart named Lal Ded appeared, took him from his mother, and whispered in the infant's ear that if he had come into this world on God's wish, then he also had to take milk as sustenance. It was only then that the infant Nund began to drink milk.[46]

The text recounts tales about Nund Rishi's penance, meditation, and peregrinations around Kashmir in tandem with stories about Lal

Ded's severing of social ties with her marital family, and her mystical wanderings in search of the truth.

Water bodies and the ability to control water emerge yet again as the primary feature of these stories. While Nund Rishi's very birth is linked to the sacred springs of Kashmir, Lal Ded is shown as creating a pond whose water cured the sick. This happened, according to the text, when her jealous, angry husband threw a stone at the water pot on Lal Ded's head. Although the pot broke, the water hovered over her head without spilling. If the water had fallen from her head, the text notes, it would have flooded the world. So Lal Ded collected it in containers and emptied them into a garden, where it formed a pond, known in common parlance as Lal Trak, in which the sick came to bathe and cure themselves.[47] The text thus illustrates the deep relationship between the two Kashmiri mystics, as well as their profound connection to and transformation of Kashmir's landscape.

A lesser known Persian tarikh from the 1850s, *Wajiz ul-Tawarikh*, written by a pir from Khanyar locality of Srinagar, cast a similarly wide net in defining historical tradition and its own place within it. The text begins with the usual hamd in praise of God, who made the universe, and the prophet and his descendants, who were protected by God until the Day of Judgement. What makes the hamd distinct, however, is that Khanyari defines the relationship between God and the prophet in terms of history, by rendering the Quran as its ultimate source, thereby displaying an interest not just in the origin of the land of Kashmir, but also in history itself. He notes that:

> The prophet was given the Quran by God, so that he could become aware of the events of the past, including the stories of the earlier prophets, and thus be able to present a unified view of the past to all. Allah's mercy rests on the prophet, his descendents, those who pursue knowledge, Sufi mystics and friends of God, and those who spend time learning about those who came before [i.e., historians]. I, a sinner soaked in sin, Ghulam Muhammad Nabi Khanyari, have read some books of history. Some historians have written about the past in brief and others at length. In spite of the sinner's weaknesses, he has taken a step in this direction to write a few pages on Kashmir's history.… If the readers find faults in the book, please do not reveal them.[48]

Wajiz ul-Tawarikh, thus, elevated history-writing to the status of a sanctioned spiritual endeavour.

The multiple oral and textual traditions that informed historical writing in Kashmir—universal, regional, and local—then come together in the text's imbricated narration of Kashmir's origin in mythical space and time. The story begins with Adam's expulsion from heaven, followed by the time of the prophet Noah, when on God's orders, a fierce storm was unleashed that caused the flooding of the earth. The story continues:

> Noah built a boat to rescue select animals and men and women. When, in accordance with the divine plan, the skies ceased their storming, the earth soaked up the water, and Kashmir's land came into being. In this land lived Sati, the wife of Shiva, who liked to bathe in a lake called Satisar, in which lived the demon Jalodhbhava. This demon caused havoc on the people of this region until, at Sage Kashyap's request, the gods drained the lake through a passage in a mountain. The drained water formed lakes and ponds in low-lying areas while the higher elevations became land. This land came to be called Kashyap Mir after the sage Kashyap, and his wife, Mir. When the Prophet Solomon travelled around the world on his flying throne, he landed on a mountain in Kashmir, and seeing before him the land submerged in water, deputed the jinns Kashaf and Mir to drain the water and make the land fit for habitation. This they did and people began to inhabit the land, making it famous as Bagh-i Sulaiman.[49]

Similarly, one finds echoes of multiple traditions—Sanskrit, Persian, Islamic, and Kashmiri—in the text's descriptions of the origins of other geographical entities within Kashmir. Water reappears as a powerful trope here, capable, under divine guidance, of both receding to give birth to land and flooding to reclaim it. For instance, the text links the emergence of Lake Wular to a story from *Rajatarangini* ascribed to a particular king in early Kashmir, which is reminiscent of a story of a cruel king from the Islamic tradition. According to this story, a tyrannical, degenerate king ruled his equally decadent subjects with no regard for the love or rules of God. A poor, honest potter from the kingdom warned the king and his fellow subjects of impending doom if they did not mend their ways, but his entreaties were ignored. One night the potter dreamt that God's wrath was about to descend on the kingdom in the form of a flood and that he should take to higher ground. In a reversal of

Kashmir's origin stories, Lake Wular emerged when the land was flooded the next day.[50]

In general, the text is interspersed with Kashmiri oral and textual traditions to highlight particular events or the attributes of certain rulers. In discussing an early Kashmiri ruler, Raja Baldeo, the text notes that his daughter was named Himal and she fell in love with the commoner, Nagaray, near a beautiful *chashma*; the story (*Himal Nagaray*) about these characters, it states, 'was told by the peasants of Kashmir'.[51] Similarly, as part of the early historical narrative of Kashmir, the text recounts the love story of Lolar and Bembor as told in the Kashmiri poem *Lolari Bembor*.[52] In yet another instance of the interjection of oral tradition into the historical narrative, Khanyari notes that the devout man named Sandhiman who came to Kashmir during the rule of Raja Narendra, and was presented in Hindu texts and oral traditions as a Hindu holy man, was none other than the Prophet Solomon. He travelled to Kashmir on his flying throne, and on Raja Narendra's behest, had the lowlands of Kashmir drained of water with the help of his jinns.[53]

These and other stories drawn from popular traditions had always been a part of Kashmir's historical tradition, as we have seen. Khanyari's text was distinct because it interwove the stories into the narrative while pointing to the sources of these oral traditions, in some cases rural folk tales, and in others, stories that had been textually versified for the first time in the Kashmiri language. This does not mean, however, that he made a self-conscious distinction between traditional historical texts and oral traditions as sources for historical composition, as was the case with writers in a variety of regions in India, such as the nationalist writer R. C. Dutt, for instance.[54] In fact, it was quite the contrary, since the lines between oral and textual sources remain rather indistinct throughout the narrative. And the past, particularly the early past, as in earlier narratives, continued to be recorded as a series of stories drawn from multiple linguistic traditions and unmarked by linear temporality.

Nonetheless, the form taken by this text is much different than earlier historical narratives, including *Tarikh-i Birbal Kachru*, because it is divided into volumes, lending it a more utilitarian, factual

appearance. The narration of the past begins with a volume on Kashmir's origins, geography, and chief characteristics, followed by the narrative of its political conditions and rulers, and finally a volume on its Sufi mystics and friends of God. The co-existence of the literal and picturesque modes of narrating the past are apparent in volume one of the text, in which Khanyari presents the famous sacred springs of Kashmir in a table, with the name, location by district and village, and chief characteristics associated with each.[55] If one reads the characteristics, however, they are typically the local traditions of a miraculous and awe-inspiring nature associated with the springs, recounted in texts such as the *Nilamata Purana*, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, the *Ain-i Akbari*, and Kashmir's Persian tarikhs, but now presented in a manner that endowed them with an objective appearance.

For the mid-nineteenth-century tarikhs, thus, historical tradition continued to be defined in terms of local, regional, and Islamic frameworks of narration and practice. Individual texts within that tradition, however, were now marked by a recognition of their production at specific moments in historical time by particular individuals. Despite the merger of the ideas of the past as tradition and as history and a more conscious self-presentation of objectivity —apparent partly in the division of the narrative of the past into volumes that were intended to perform different functions for different audiences—these narratives were not driven by a need to authenticate themselves on the basis of the colonial historical method. They retained the literary and picturesque features of a distinctive Kashmiri historicity, in which time and space co-existed as both mythical/discursive and linear/territorial.

Selecting and Categorizing Sources

The historical narratives composed in late-nineteenth-century Kashmir were defined to a greater degree by a conversation with the new discourse on history and the historical method, particularly in terms of their assessment of sources. However, this assessment was driven not only by the dictates of the colonial historical method, but also through an ongoing engagement with the indigenous

tradition of historical composition. These narratives were thus as critical as European orientalist activities that were taking place in the context of Dogra rule, to establishing a kind of acceptable archive for studying and researching Kashmir's past. In the process, they drew the act of historical composition and its subject, Kashmir itself, into new linguistic, spiritual, and spatial frameworks.

Hargopal Kaul Khasta's *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*, the only nineteenth-century history of Kashmir in Urdu, was written primarily for an audience beyond Kashmir in the British Punjab (where it was published in 1877). This is apparent from Khasta's choice of Urdu for the composition of the narrative, which he explains was because it was 'the language of common usage'. That it was written for outsiders is also clear from the fact that Khasta noted that he wanted the text to provide readers with a sense of travelling through Kashmir as they learned about its past.[56] The objective of the narrative went far beyond this, however, and was clearly aimed at presenting Kashmir as an integral part of Hindustan and the font of Aryan (Hindu) civilization in the Indian subcontinent. Khasta attempted to accomplish this, partly, by evaluating Kashmir's historical tradition as a whole, and the particular sources available for constructing a narrative of Kashmir's past, in terms of colonial concerns regarding Indian historical writing and contemporary nationalist historiographical debates. It is also clear, however, that Khasta saw his own text as participating in and continuing Kashmir's indigenous tradition of historical composition.

That Khasta claimed Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* as the 'authentic, ancient, and best'[57] history of Kashmir, and hence the font of historical writing in Kashmir is not surprising. What is interesting is that he engages with the text in a distinct manner:

> It is true that *Rajatarangini* is written in poetic form and in the exaggerated style of the ancient times. But because there is no other book besides it from this period that is reliable, some things can be learned from it about the past…. However, if there is information in it that appears illogical or sounds nonsensical, there is no harm in expunging it.[58]

Besides evaluating *Rajatarangini*'s style based on prevailing orientalist ideas, Khasta also engaged with it as a source to be evaluated based on the accuracy of its historical record. According to him, it was unfortunate that Kalhana had been unclear about the rulers of Kashmir before Gonanda, and later scribes and historians had absorbed this lack of clarity into their copies or their own works by whimsically adding or subtracting years from rulers' reigns. Thus, ancient Kashmir remained shrouded in darkness, especially in terms of who lived in Kashmir prior to Kashyap Rishi's arrival in the land and who ruled Kashmir between Kashyap Rishi and Gonanda.[59] Khasta, on the other hand, claimed to have cleared the doubts present in the early cantos of *Rajatarangini* about the length of the reigns of particular Kashmiri kings by carrying out 'in-depth research' that involved a comparison of several manuscript copies of the text, as well as Persian and English historical narratives. This had allowed him to include the exact number of years, months, and days of each ruler's reign in Kashmir.[60]

What lent the text its modernity, besides the fact that it was couched in the language of research and objectivity, was that it was bent on proving that Kashmir was a 'Hindu' entity based on a discussion of the authenticity of certain sources over others in constructing its past. Khasta was the first historian to accord *mahatmya*s (pilgrimage manuals) of Kashmir, including *Sharika Mahatmya* and *Vatista Mahatmya*, with legitimacy as sources. In terms of Persian historical narratives from Kashmir, he seems to have picked the ones written by Kashmiri Pandits, such as Narayan Koul and Birbal Kachru,[61] while ignoring others written by Muslims, such as *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, and *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, among many others. Echoing the opinions of colonial officials such as H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, who had translated Indo-Persian tarikhs into English,[62] Khasta stated that:

> Muslim historians of Kashmir, out of fear or a desire for rewards, indulged in writing encomiums to rulers and thus failed to mention their deficiencies, in particular their destruction of idols and temples, atrocities towards Hindus, enslavement of Hindu women, and their indulgence in luxurious lifestyles…. While

> Western intellectuals pride themselves on freedom of expression, Muslims reject research and investigation and label non-Muslims *kafir*s [unbelievers].[63]

Thus for him, while texts written by Hindu historians and spiritual figures, as well as those written by English and European travellers to the region, such as J. Ince, W. Moorcroft, and F. Drew, were valid sources for a reconstruction of Kashmir's past, those written by Muslim historians of Kashmir were deemed biased, and hence invalid.

The section on Kashmir's political history, which the text presents as a subset of the history of India as a whole, begins with a more general lament about the lack of sources for the reconstruction of Hindustan's ancient history. Khasta attributes this not to the inability of Indians to write histories—which he argues they did in the form of stories and poetry—but rather to the fanaticism of Muslims, who destroyed these texts. All those who invaded Hindustan, such as Mahmud Ghazni, Timur Lane, Babur, Humanyun, Akbar, and the Afghans, also invaded Kashmir, in the process destroying the texts that would tell us about its past. The existence of texts such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and *Rajataranginis*, according to him, bore testament to the wisdom of Hindus and their ability to write about the past without fabrication or exaggeration. Those who destroyed the other texts written by Hindus did so to make them appear ignorant and primitive.[64]

An important way in which Khasta attempted to acquire authenticity for his text, and for himself as a historian, was by stating that he had validated his sources by travelling through Kashmir to visit the places mentioned in the texts and talk to locals to 'garner the truth' about the incidents discussed in them.[65] It was only then, he noted, that he composed the history, 'devoid of exaggeration and worthless information', which he divided into three sections—the first devoted to geography, the second to historical and political conditions, and the third to a statistical mapping of the primary features of Kashmir, including its roads, population, temples, shrines, districts, rulers and their periods of rule.[66] The last volume of the text is by far the most detailed statistical account of Kashmir's main features seen in any historical narrative until this point. Khasta

probably envisaged his text, in part, as a source of reference for colonial officials. And, by couching the text in terms of a rational, well-researched endeavour, Khasta rendered two ideas into objective facts: that Kashmir's narrative tradition was an integral part of the larger Indian (Hindu) tradition of historical composition, while Kashmir itself was an Indian (Hindu) entity.

The late-nineteenth-century multivolume history in Persian, *Tarikh-i Hassan*, was written, partly at least, as a response to Khasta's *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir* and the ideas on history represented by the colonial historical method. It is apparent that *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir* served as an organizational model for the text, as well as a source of statistical information. It also most likely provided Khuihami with knowledge regarding Urdu and English sources on Kashmir. At the same time, however, *Tarikh-i Hassan* reclaimed the right to draw the contours of Kashmir's historical tradition as distinct and unique—rather than as part of a wider Aryan tradition—celebrating and embracing its length and breadth and the style of its authors, while also sifting through it to create a recognizable archive for studying Kashmir's past.

The self-consciousness regarding historical composition displayed in *Tarikh-i Hassan* and its factual idiom has led contemporary historians of Kashmir to attribute a 'modern historical consciousness'[67] to its author, Hassan Shah Khuihami. This has given rise to a sense that the text is somehow unique, not just in the context of nineteenth-century Kashmir, but in Kashmir's historical tradition as a whole. Discussions of Kashmir's historical tradition move seamlessly from Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* to Khuihami's *Tarikh-i Hassan*, thus drawing a direct link between the two while obscuring the vibrancy of historical writing in between. I suggest here that *Tarikh-i Hassan*, far from being unique, represents an amalgamation of a variety of styles, genres, and content that formed part of Kashmir's long narrative tradition. In some cases, the text's author, Hassan, literally lifted portions of earlier narratives (including Khasta's *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*) and wove them into his text, as a result of which it is not only a narrative of Kashmir's past, but also an archive of its very narrative tradition. Rather than dismissing this as 'unimaginative borrowing', it is more fruitful to

consider this form of narration, as argued by Stephen Berkwitz with reference to Sri Lankan *vamsa*s, as ‘a deeper layering of material in the text, wherein the narrative at hand is shown to resonate with the accounts of other authoritative texts’.[68]

The longest and most comprehensive text discussed thus far, *Tarikh-i Hassan* is divided into four volumes, and was likely written and edited over the course of several years, beginning in 1884. Hassan wrote the geography of Kashmir at the behest of Dewan Anant Ram, the Prime Minister of Kashmir, which later became volume one of the text. Volume two covers the political history of Kashmir from its inception to the late nineteenth century; volume three is a collective hagiography of Kashmir’s Sufi saints, seers and elders, and their deeds; and volume four is a brief discussion of Persian poets of Kashmir from the middle of the sixteenth century. Volume one of the manuscript was published by the Research and Publications Department of the Jammu and Kashmir government in 1954, followed by the fourth volume in 1961. Subsequently, Urdu and Kashmiri translations of the first three volumes of the text were also published in Kashmir.

As mentioned earlier, Hassan was introduced to the Dogra court when he wrote a protest poem against the famine relief measures taken by the Dogra state, which later recommended him as a guide to Walter Lawrence, who was the settlement commissioner of Kashmir. His travels with Lawrence may have prompted the prime minister to commission him to write the geography. However, it is evident that Hassan did not compose the other volumes for the Dogra court, as he had the complete manuscript copied by the famous calligrapher of the period, Saifullah Pandit, and donated it to Khanqah-i Mualla (shrine of Sayyid Ali Hamadani) as *waqf* (trust) in 1896, two years before his death.[69] Hassan’s endeavour was thus legitimized by both the court and the khanqah—the two nodes of religio-political authority in Kashmir—thereby rendering him especially well-positioned in terms of access to a wide array of sources for the composition of the history.

Moreover, it illustrates that Hassan saw the resultant text as part of a longer, ongoing continuum of historical production about Kashmir in the past, present, and future, in which the spiritual and

political pasts of Kashmir remained closely intertwined. Further, by presenting it as validated by the Hamadani hospice in particular (which was recognized by this time as the Kashmiri Kaaba, since it was the shrine of the founder of Islam in Kashmir), he meant the text to be read and heard as the Kashmiri (Muslim) community's articulation of its own identity. This takes on added meaning given that in late-nineteenth-century Kashmir, through vibrant debates on what it meant to be Muslim in Kashmir, Kashmiri Muslims were beginning to draw the contours of a community identity in response to the Dogra state.[70]

In the introduction to the text, Hassan clearly presents himself as building on and continuing the vibrant tradition of historical composition in Kashmir. The narrative was thus meant for consumption by local Kashmiri readers, not outsiders, although it is apparent that he also wanted it to appeal to a wider readership. He states that:

> I, son of Shaiwa, desired to undertake the task of writing Kashmir's history, but did not do so because I did not want to be criticized by those who disparaged without any purpose. However, since the elders of the community and my respected friends put pressure on me, I began the task. To dress this bride [book] in modesty and begin it, it was necessary to consult earlier histories.… After many attempts and much research, thirty books that illuminated the conditions and events of this land of flowers were discovered and it was the study and organization of these books that became the starting point of this task.[71]

Hassan then lists these sources, alongside a brief description of each. He further writes that he had been careful to compose the book in simple language that was devoid of complex words and phrases, so as to make it comprehensible to common people; as seen above, he referred to the text as a bride that had to be dressed modestly rather than ostentatiously.[72]

Despite its brevity and simplicity, however, states Hassan, the text did not suffer from the deficiencies of short and simple writing.[73] Moreover, it was 'devoid of prejudice, hubris, and safeguarded everyone's respectability'.[74] Interestingly, and not surprisingly, unlike earlier Persian tarikhs, the text is peppered with words and phrases in Kashmiri, thereby inflecting it with a local flavour. This is most

apparent in its first volume, where the tables that discuss the features of the products of mulk-i Kashmir, such as fruits, grains, medicinal plants, spices, vegetables, flowers, and so on, record their Persian as well as Kashmiri names side by side.[75]

In keeping with earlier historians of Kashmir, Hassan too presents *Rajatarangini* as Kashmir's 'foundational history'. However, for him, *Rajatarangini* represented a specific text created by Kalhana at a particular historical moment, which was a repository of historical facts, rather than an amorphous tradition. Thus, rather than questioning the motivations of its author in composing the text and through it, rethinking the purpose of historical narration, as in Dyadmari's case, Hassan presented himself as correcting its factual historical record. He takes care to note that his study of the text was based on an authentic manuscript against which he had compared the Persian translation in his possession. This was necessary, according to him, 'due to scribal errors in copying manuscripts and the alterations to the original text made by scribes and translators through the ages'.[76]

More significantly, Hassan claims that he had filled the lacunae in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* by introducing, for the first time in a history of Kashmir, a discussion of the reigns of thirty-five kings that Kalhana had been unable to unearth due to the destruction of relevant records. Hassan had drawn this list from a manuscript of the Persian translation of the *Ratnakar Purana* entitled *Waqia-i Kashmir* that he had acquired in the Punjab, a text not available to earlier historians of Kashmir. Furthermore, displaying his concern with precise dating, he notes that his history was unique in relating a variety of dating methods to each other and providing dates in *Hijri* (Islamic calendar), *Iesvi* (Gregorian calendar) and *Bikrami* (Hindu calendar used during Dogra rule).[77]

It is worth discussing the sources other than Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* mentioned by Hassan in the introduction, since it illustrates the author's recognition of the availability of sources in multiple languages that provided the self-conscious foundation for a text such as *Tarikh-i Hassan*. Rather than bemoaning the paucity of historical sources in reconstructing the history of Kashmir, Hassan

admitted that he had to sift through the numerous records at his disposal to arrive at the thirty sources he utilized most extensively in his writing. Furthermore, according to him, 'I compared the books against each other to ensure the veracity of their contents and ignored those events and parables that I could not prove to be reliable'.[78] The first text Hassan mentions in the list, not surprisingly, is *Waqia-i Kashmir*, the Persian translation of *Ratnakar Purana* carried out by Mullah Ahmed in Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's court (r. 1420–70). This text was unavailable to some earlier authors, but was sought out by Hassan during his travels in the Punjab.[79] This is followed Muhammad Azam Dyadmari's *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, on which *Tarikh-i Hassan* relies quite heavily, particularly in the volumes on the saints and poets of Kashmir, and the early-seventeenth-century *Baharistan-i Shahi* and *Tarikh-i Haider Malik Chadurah*, from which Hassan drew information about the Mughal conquest of Kashmir. He further mentions *Panj Masnavi*, a collection of five masnavis written in praise of Kashmir in the mid-seventeenth century. Hassan also lists Narayan Koul Ajiz's *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, the incomplete *Shahnama-i Kashmir* (Kashmir's history in verse commissioned by Governor Sukh Jeewan), and Saadullah Shahabadi's versified narrative *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, all from the eighteenth century.[80]

Hassan mentions several nineteenth-century texts in his list of sources, including *Gulzar-i Kashmir* (History of Kashmir) and *Gulab Nama* (Maharaja Gulab Singh's court history), both written by Dewan Kripa Ram, Maharaja Ranbir Singh's Prime Minister, as well as *Tarikh-i Kashmir Birbal Kachru* and *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir* by Hargopal Kaul Khasta. It is noteworthy that the only Persian narratives from outside Kashmir utilized by Hassan were *Tarikh-i Farishta* by Muhammad Qasim Hindushah and *Tarikh-i Rashidi* by Mirza Haider Dughlat, and did not include texts such as the *Ain-i Akbari* and *Zafarnama*, which had been popular sources for earlier Persian historical narratives of Kashmir. Further, Hassan utilized, like Khasta before him, English books such as J. Ince's *Kashmir Handbook* and Frederick Drew's *Northern Barrier of India*.[81] Hassan also relied on sources in Urdu, mostly textbooks published in Lahore, Kanpur, and Lucknow, on the history and geography of

Hindustan and the world, as well as some Urdu translations of Persian histories. In addition to the above sources, he lists the tazkiras of saints and Sufi orders of Kashmir that were written throughout the centuries (particularly for his volume on saints and Sufi mystics), such as *Dastur-us Salikin*, *Asrar-ul Abrar*, *Fatuhat-i Kubrawiya*, *Fatuhat-i Qadiriya*, and *Khawariq-us Salikin*.[82]

The text discusses the histories of Kashmir further in volume one (which focuses on the geography of Kashmir), by presenting the histories as one of the land's many attributes.[83] It is here that Hassan gives his own opinions about the main characteristics of each of these works, thereby creating a catalogue for future reference. Again, the list begins with Pandit Ratnakar's *Ratnakar Purana*, followed by Kalhana Pandit's *Rajatarangini*, which Hassan notes was 'famous in the mulk during this time'. In addition, he notes the existence of the 'well-known' Sanskrit histories by Bholaraja, Padma Mehr, Kshemendra, Srivara, Prajyabhatta, and Jonaraja, some of which were collected, according to him, by Buhler Sahab.[84] This indicates that he was aware of Georg Buhler's tour in Kashmir to collect Sanskrit manuscripts in 1875 and the more general Indological endeavours to collate and translate Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* in this period. Moreover, the fact that he made a note of this was clearly a means to authenticate his own work as based on a knowledge of valid sources. He then mentions Persian histories that were no longer extant, followed by *Tarikh-i Haider Malik Chadurah* and *Baharistan-i Shahi*, both of which he condemned as biased and as being replete with self-praise.[85]

He notes further that Dyadmari's *Waqiat-i Kashmir* was 'a clearly written history that is beneficial for Muslims'[86] and upheld Narayan Koul's history as an exemplary text that 'presented a brief but just view of Kashmir's past'.[87] Birbal Kachru's history was an example of beautiful prose composition not seen since Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*, although it displayed a partisan outlook that made it useful only for Hindus.[88] Notably, Hassan dismisses Khasta's *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir* as 'an extremely prejudiced history that was not at all useful for the people'.[89] Thus, not only did Hassan accept the historical tradition as a natural feature of Kashmir's landscape, but

he also evaluated individual texts from within and outside Kashmir on the basis of their style and authorial intent. In some senses, we have here the creation of an archive for studying Kashmir's past, as Hassan comments on how he acquired the sources, whether they were extant, and how useful they were for the task of historical narration.

Much like Dyadmari before him, Hassan too declared the seventeenth-century tarikhs as biased and overly motivated by the personal concerns of their authors, especially because they were directly linked to the court. While recognizing the literary quality of some texts, such as *Tarikh-i Birbal Kachru* and *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*, he nonetheless dismissed them as harmful to the interests of Muslims since they were written to advance Hindu ideological agendas. At the same time, Dyadmari's mid-eighteenth-century history, *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, was the example of a model historical text for Hassan because it benefited the Muslim community by presenting Kashmir's past as created equally by Sufi spiritual personages and temporal authorities. Thus for Hassan, history-writing was more than a personal enterprise carried out for the edification of an author or his patron; it had to be self-consciously directed to serve the interests of a broader community. The Kashmiri social—qaum as people—that had been articulated so poignantly in the eighteenth-century tarikhs, had now been transformed into the Kashmiri political—qaum as Muslim community.

That Hassan was in conversation with the colonial historical method and the criticisms launched by colonial officials, orientalists, and Indologists on South Asian historical writing is evident from his brief allusion to critics as the main reason for his reticence in composing the text. It is also apparent in his attempt to list and discuss his sources at the beginning of the text, while pointing to the authenticity of the *Rajatarangini* manuscript in his possession. Hassan undoubtedly presented his tarikh as an objective history that met the standards of the rationalist, positivist historical method. At the same time, however, he defended the picturesque and marvellous style of recounting the past that, for him, rendered Kashmir's historical tradition unique:

> While it is a crime to include these impossible exaggerations about past kings from the perspective of critics, I did not think it appropriate to ignore them and have included some for the edification of those of my friends who have a taste for the wondrous and the awe-inspiring. I am pointing this out at the outset for readers to be aware that the earlier periods of Kashmir's history are filled with such hyperbolic stories regarding rulers.[90]

This statement illustrates that Hassan recognized that a historical text could serve a variety of purposes for different audiences, including entertainment and spiritual edification through a recounting of familiar tales alongside relaying factual information about the past.

Thus, for Hassan, the storytelling idiom did not necessarily preclude an objective narration of the past. The numerous stories regarding the rulers of Kashmir, told in *Rajatarangini* and later Persian histories, coalesced in *Tarikh-i Hassan*'s political narrative. At times Hassan notes that some of the stories (*qisse*) sounded unbelievable, but he nevertheless includes them in the text to give his readers/listeners a sense of the character of the ruler that would not have been apparent from merely detailing his policies. The narrative is also peppered with historical anecdotes that perform similar functions, such as anecdotes about Nadir Shah after his conquest of Delhi, which illustrate the impotence of the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah in the face of Nadir Shah's puissance.[91]

Stories about the miraculous deeds of the Sufi mystics and divines of Kashmir are an especially important part of *Tarikh-i Hassan*'s narrative. However, rather than entwining them with the political narrative, the third volume of the text specifically performed the role of collective hagiography of the Sufis of Kashmir and was meant to be read and listened to by the local population in their homes, at shrines, and at religious fairs. The volume is divided into sections that group the mystics into several categories based on their spiritual genealogies: *Sadaat* (Sufi mystics who traced their descent from the prophet); Rishis (indigenous mystics); Spiritual Elders; *Ulema* and Scholars; and *Majzoob* (ecstatics).[92] It ends with a description of the relics of prophets and saints to be found in Kashmir, such as the hair of the Prophet Muhammad (sent by

Emperor Aurangzeb himself to Kashmir) in the mosque at Hazratbal, which continued to mark the region as a sacred space long after the friends of God had departed to their heavenly abodes.[93] The volume thus displays a sense of connectedness with the past, as it presents the past activities of the Sufi mystics as a continuous mission played out on Kashmir's landscape in the present and the future.

Hassan described this volume as the text's most significant part, berating himself in its introduction for neglecting the lives and deeds of Sufi divines in earlier volumes:

> Prior to this, you have wasted your time in recounting the history of bygone rulers. Repent for this, and with all your heart and soul write about the lives and conditions of the friends of God. Perhaps then, through their blessings, you will find a place on their side on the Day of Judgment. Oh God, I have no confidence in my ability to accomplish this task. Give me the strength to carry out research as I record the deeds of these individuals.[94]

The volume was thus devoted to recounting the feats of the friends of God, who had especially blessed Kashmir with their presence and actions because of its special qualities. According to Hassan, the tazkira, which was based on scattered information distilled from earlier tarikhs and tazkiras (mentioned earlier), was a memorial to the lives and deeds of the friends of God and would serve as a source of spiritual edification for the people. As he notes, reading about and listening to the lives of the friends of God and visiting their tombs could turn 'marble into precious gems'.[95]

Since it was a separate volume in a multivolume historical compendium, Hassan clearly felt unhindered by the need to appease critics who might have questioned the purpose of recounting miracles and legends relating to the Sufi divines in a history, and as a result the text focuses precisely on these aspects of their lives. Much like the earlier tazkiras, these stories, related about individuals such as Bulbul Shah, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, among hundreds of others, emphasized their piety, their superior capabilities compared to temporal powers, and their collective efforts that led to the Islamization of the landscape of Kashmir. Hassan credits Bulbul Shah, for instance, with not only converting Rinchen to Islam, thus setting in motion

Kashmir's transition to Islam, but also initiating the denizens of the Vitasta (Jhelum) into the true faith by staying submerged in the waters of the river for six months.[96]

Time and again, the text recounts stories familiar to us from Chapter 1, in which Sufi mystics such as Shaykh Hamza gained control over the springs, lakes, and rivers by erasing the presence of pre-Islamic practices and converting Nagas (snake dwellers of the springs) to Islam.[97] In addition, the volume does not shy away from describing the encouragement of temple destruction by these individuals, as in earlier tazkiras, in their efforts to naturalize Islam on Kashmir's landscape.[98] However, Hassan emphasizes throughout the volume that the conversion of people did not take place through the force of emperors' swords, but rather through the 'light of truth and spiritual knowledge' of the friends of God: 'This victory over hearts was the victory of Islam and the victory of spirituality was the victory of truth'.[99] This presented Islamization in Kashmir as a natural transformation rather than a forced conversion.

In a lengthy discussion on Shaykh Nooruddin's life, which relies heavily upon earlier tazkiras, but also Nooruddin's own verses, the volume states that Nooruddin was of royal descent (not from a *Dom* or low caste family as recorded in most earlier texts) and accepted initiation into Islam at the hands of Mir Muhammad Hamadani.[100] It is interesting to note that the idea of the Rishi's royal descent is based on those verses in which Nooruddin rejected caste and class differences.[101] This illustrates the impact of the availability of Nooruddin's verses in textual form on historical writing in Kashmir. Indeed, Hassan acknowledges that Nooruddin's verses had been textually recorded in the Persian script by elders and were difficult to read because their Kashmiri was archaic and heavily Sanskritized; it was not the Kashmiri used in common parlance in the late nineteenth century.[102] And a perusal and inclusion of the verses was meant to endow the text with legitimacy to correct the errors regarding the Rishi's life and genealogy. As a whole, this volume was undoubtedly meant to serve as a narration of the collective history of the Muslim community in Kashmir, presented as the

continuation of the past into the present, and most likely, into the future as well.

The late-nineteenth-century histories of Kashmir were critical to redefining the contours of Kashmir's historical tradition, as they engaged with wider colonial and nationalist ideas regarding historical composition. While *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir* attempted to appropriate Kashmir's tradition of historical and literary composition by presenting it as a fundamental part of Aryan literature and civilization, *Tarikh-i Hassan* resisted this by emphasizing the discrete and well-defined nature of Kashmir's historical tradition. *Tarikh-i Hassan* marked and discussed the texts that formed the backbone of the tradition, thus giving it coherent shape and creating an archive for the study of Kashmir's past. Although clearly in conversation with colonial concerns regarding historical writing in the subcontinent—and thus presenting themselves as products of an objective, research-based methodology—texts such as *Tarikh-i Hassan* were able to balance the strictures of modern narration with the picturesque style and tropes so entrenched within Kashmir's historical tradition. By drawing, sometimes verbatim, on earlier texts, *Tarikh-i Hassan* thus became the literal embodiment of Kashmir's historical tradition, and through it, the voice of its people as a political community.

Place, People, Geography

While eighteenth-century texts, as we have seen, had begun the tradition of giving voice to the category of people, as well as of recognizing the divisions amongst them, it was the nineteenth-century texts that began to define the contours of this entity in a more concrete fashion. The definition of place, so important to earlier narratives, was now no longer meaningful without its people, and thus definitions of place and people and their origins were inextricably intertwined in nineteenth-century narratives. Whether through a description of the origin stories of Kashmir with a renewed emphasis on its inhabitants or through the deployment of the language of geography to locate Kashmir within a global context, nineteenth-century narratives simultaneously defined the place and

its people. This was designed to serve specific ideological purposes in the context of Kashmir's transition to Dogra rule and the emergence of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.

For these narratives, thus, the story of Kashmir's origin could no longer be simply a story of the emergence of the land, but had to include its inhabitants as they interacted with and settled within the place thus created. This is apparent in *Tarikh-i Birbal Kachru*'s narration of the origin story (repeated in later nineteenth-century tarikhs as well) in which the landscape and its inhabitants act on each other. The text begins by recounting the familiar origin story of Kashmir from Satisar through the intervention of the gods on behalf of Kashyap Rishi, due to the terrorization of the people by the water demon, Jalodhbhava.[103] The story, however, does not end with the emergence of the land and its naming as Kashmir. Rather, it goes into a detailed discussion of how the beautiful, yet inhospitable, landscape that emerged as a result, came to be inhabited by people throughout the year:

> Once the land that came to be named Kashmir emerged from the lake, people came to live there during the summers, withdrawing to the plains when the snows came in the winters. One year, a Brahman named Chandradev, who had stayed behind in Kashmir in a cave through the winter, became the plaything of a group of devs and jinns who inhabited Kashmir in the winter months. Once while being tossed about like a ball by these beings, he fell into a lake, where he was confronted by Neelnag [King of the Nagas, the original inhabitants of Kashmir], to whom he recounted his plight. On hearing his woes, Neelnag gave the Brahman a copy of the *Nilamata Purana*, which detailed the ways in which the new inhabitants of Kashmir could conciliate its original inhabitants [devs, jinns, and Nagas] by performing certain elaborate rituals. The Brahman shared this information with the other inhabitants once they returned to Kashmir in the summer, and they were able to make Kashmir their home by pacifying the pesky beings as well as the harsh climate of the land. This was done by creating tirthas [pilgrimage spots] at the nagas [springs] of Kashmir, thereby paying due obeisance to the Nagas who dwelt in its water bodies.[104]

The acceptance, thus, of multiple spiritual traditions transformed the land into an inhabited place, by endowing the people with the ability to control their at once beautiful and harsh landscape.

Not surprisingly, the nineteenth-century texts display a keen interest in aligning groups of people with specific places in a global context and delineating the differences among them. *Tarikh-i Kashmir Birbal Kachru*, accordingly, weaves into its political narrative the histories of different regions on the globe that had significantly impacted Kashmir's history and people. So for instance, the text launches into detailed accounts of the history of Central Asia (Timur Lane), Hindustan (Mughals), Persia and Afghanistan (Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali), and Punjab (Sikhs). Further, it displays a strong understanding of the differences among different qaums, such as the Chinese, Persians, and Feranghi (British), whose advent into India during the time of the Mughals and the subsequent establishment of their rule in Calcutta, the text briefly mentions. It notes that the Persians had the sweetest language while the Chinese excelled in making beautiful porcelain, paintings, and textiles. They also considered themselves superior to any other qaum. The Feranghi were good at making weapons, with which they inspired fear like wild beasts in the hearts of people. They invented strange wonders with their hands, and read and interpreted Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian works in a matter of days.[105]

The late-nineteenth-century tarikhs were even more specific about locating Kashmir within a more global, territorial worldview, which is evident in their multivolume historical narratives, with volume one almost always dedicated to Kashmir's geography. Furthermore, the geography volume usually began with Kashmir's origin story, as well as its settlement by people, and proceeded to statistically enumerate (usually in tables), even as it described, the main features of Kashmir's landscape. It also attempted to enumerate and categorize the population of Kashmir into specific groups. In part, this was the result of the drawing of the boundaries of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir in the late 1840s, followed by government efforts to delineate its districts, their properties, and the main features and products of each division, as well as assess the number, history, and occupations of the inhabitants within these divisions. Moreover, the specifically Hindu overtones employed by the Dogra regime to legitimize itself, which came on the heels of the anti-Muslim policies of the Sikh governors

(such as a ban on cow slaughter), framed the ways in which these narratives categorized Kashmir's geography, its people, and their relationships in the past.

For Khasta, the geography of Kashmir was at the centre of his tarikh, *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*, and indeed at the heart of Kashmir's history. According to him, he had written a geography of Kashmir that had been published in Lucknow, but after spending some time in Kashmir, he realized that he should write the geography and history of Kashmir in tandem.[106] (It is noteworthy that both *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir* and *Tarikh-i Hassan* began as narratives on Kashmir's geography.) *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*'s volume on Kashmir's geography begins with its origin from the lake known as Satisar, after the drainage of the water through Baramulla as a result of divine intervention.[107] This was critical for achieving one of the text's objectives, which, as we have seen, was to locate Kashmir within the framework of Aryan, Hindu civilization. Thus, not surprisingly, in placing Kashmir in a larger geographical context, Hindustan emerges as the central reference point for the text. The division of the world into seven climes in earlier narratives, and their placement of Kashmir in the fourth clime, is replaced with the world's five-fold continental division into Asia, Europe, Africa, America, and Australasia and Polynesia. The text then notes that Hindustan lay in the southern portion of Asia, and included regions from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.[108]

This is followed by a discussion of the regions and princely states of Hindustan, including Assam, Bengal, Rajaputana, and Jammu and Kashmir.[109] Khasta argues that although Kashmir was located at the same latitude as Morocco, Baghdad, and Carolina in America, 'it is necessary and valid to include it as part of Hindustan because from ancient times, when its inhabitants were Hindus, it has been connected to Hindustan. Even today, its relationship to Jammu, which falls within Hindustan, is deep'.[110] Indeed, emphasizing the location of Kashmir within the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir* includes a descriptive section on Jammu as part of Kashmir's geography that reads like a textual map

of Jammu city and its environs, listing its localities, temples, pilgrimage spots, and their histories.[111]

The style and content of *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*'s volume on geography resembles a colonial gazetteer, in that it gives the population of the princely state and includes subsections on the districts, rivers, springs, products, boats, bridges, cities, people of Kashmir, their food, languages, religions, clothing styles, livelihoods, scripts, and tourism. The volume goes further in emphasizing the differences not just between people of the different regions of the princely state, but the divisions among the people of Kashmir as well. In a census-like division, the text labels the people of Kashmir as Pandits, Bohris, Sikhs, and Sunni and Shia Muslims. According to the text, not only were the Pandits the real and ancient inhabitants of the mulk who were brought to the land by Kashyap Rishi, they were also, 'one of the finest communities of *Aryavarta* [land of the Aryas]—strong, fair, witty, and proud'.[112] As a result, the text claims Kashmir for all Hindus: 'Hindus consider Kashmir the earth's head and eyes, and more sacred than any other land because it holds all their tirthas on its surface'.[113]

It points out further that Muslims too considered Kashmir as a paradise on earth and called it Bagh-i Sulaiman because they believed that the Prophets Moses and Solomon had passed through Kashmir, and the shrines and tombs of Muslim saints dotted Kashmir's landscape.[114] However, that Khasta considered Kashmir a specifically Hindu sacred space, the land of the ancient Aryans, and the font of Hindu culture is evident from his detailed descriptions of the ruins of ancient temples, such as Avantipura, Parahaspura, Hari Parbat, and so on, as well as Kashmir's Sanskrit scholars, historians, poets, and philosophers, including Kshemendra, Bilhana, Kalhana, Jonaraja, Srivara, and Abhinavgupta.[115] One can see here the beginnings of the deracination of the indigenous Sanskrit tradition from its Kashmiri context, a process that would gather force in the last two decades of the nineteenth century through orientalist and Indological efforts at collecting and collating its Sanskrit manuscripts.

Not only was the place thus defined by its inhabitants, but the people themselves were now to be identified solely based on their religious affiliation, endowing certain groups with a more legitimate claim over the territory. Claiming Kashmiri Pandits as the original inhabitants of Kashmir and as members of an Aryan Hindu race served two purposes for Khasta: it validated the Hindu Dogra dynasty's rule over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, and at the same time, it was a means to ensure that Kashmiri Pandits would retain their position within the structures of the government. The geographical linkage of Kashmir to Jammu (the home of the Dogras), discussed earlier, and the descriptions in the text of Dogra rule in Kashmir as a shining light that had brought an end to the age of darkness,[116] are unsurprising if read in this context.

Tarikh-i Hassan does not directly contradict Khasta's ideas regarding the Dogra dynasty, most likely due to political expediency, but it does reclaim Kashmir as a distinct mulk (country). Its volume on geography reads like a history or geography textbook in use in schools in British India, which is not surprising given Hassan's reliance on Urdu textbooks from the Punjab. The volume begins with a description of astronomical, geographical, and other general features of the globe,[117] dividing the population of the world into five continents, with a brief segment on the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus.[118] The section then gives details about England, Scotland, Wales, France, Belgium, Ottoman Asia, Central Asia, Africa, and the islands of the Indian Ocean, noting their geographical location, religious affiliations of their inhabitants, and the linguistic differences amongst them. In addition, the section is devoted to a census of the world's population, languages, religions, and other features.[119]

Having thus established a global context for a discussion of Kashmir's geography, the volume presents Kashmir as a mulk in no uncertain terms, which was also a part of Asia, with China to its east, Central Asia to its north, and Hindustani Asia to its west and south. Reverting then to earlier Persian narratives, the text places Kashmir in the fourth clime, noting at the same time its longitude, latitude, length and width.[120] Following this, it relates Kashmir's

origin story, based on the *Nilamata Purana* (which it recognizes as the source), with a few additions to the tale as we have seen in earlier narratives:

> According to the *Nilamata Purana*, Kashmir was a lake named Satisar in which lived a dev named Jaladev, who was a cannibal. He was a devotee of Brahma, from whom he had received a boon that he would be undefeated in the water. Once, Brahma's grandson, Kashyap Rishi, was wandering by the lake and was surprised to find no humans near such a beautiful place. When he learned of Jaladev's atrocities, he became determined to vanquish the demon, and prayed to Brahma for one thousand years. Finally, Brahma agreed to help him and along with the other gods, attempted to kill Jaladev. Since Jaladev hid in the water from the gods' attacks, Sri Kishanji use the Sudarshan chakra to create a breach in the mountain from which the water flowed out, and a bird took a piece of the mountain in its beak and dropped it on Jaladev. Once the water receded, land appeared, and streams and gardens were created. The gods selected portions of this beautiful land for their own habitation and these places still remain pilgrimage spots. Then Kashyap Rishi populated this beautiful land with Brahmans from all over the world and called it KashyapMar, or the home of Kashyap.[121]

It goes further to record the story of Kashmir's settlement throughout the year through the efforts of Brahman Chandradev, who made a pact with the king of the Nagas to follow the ritual and moral injunctions detailed in the *Nilamata Purana*.[122] In an attempt to give scientific validity to these origin stories, it notes that one only had to look around Kashmir to recognize the signs that proved that the land must indeed have been submerged under water.[123]

Kashmir was still a paradise on earth (*jannat-i nazir*) for Hassan, but now its sacredness was couched in a more factual, regional and global, rather than a universal, idiom. The text thus presents a dense description of Kashmir's geographical features, including its breezes, water bodies, grasses, gardens, majestic mountains (which acted like walls and provided the sweet air to freshen the mulk), meadows, orchards, grains, hunting, absence of poisonous snakes and other such animals, artistic abilities of its people, its sacredness (which had drawn the sages of Hinduism and the seers of Islam to the land), and as mentioned earlier, its histories.[124] The rest of the volume on Kashmir's geography is an almost exact copy of *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*'s very factual geographical section—

which includes subsections on springs, meadows, products, towns, cities, natural disasters, as well as its people (like Khasta, the text divides them into Pandits, Sikhs, Bohris, and Sunni and Shia Muslims), their clothing styles, eating habits, and religious affiliations —with a few alterations and additions.

Many of the additions were typically what Hassan referred to as qisse related to the topic of the section, drawn from earlier texts or oral traditions. These stories were designed to bring out Kashmir's uniqueness and intertwine its geography with its political, economic, and spiritual pasts. For instance, in the section on Kashmir's *pashmina* cloth, the text attributes the introduction of pashmina wool to Kashmir and its subsequent production into shawl cloth to Sayyid Ali Hamadani:

> The idea that pashmina cloth, whose structure, fineness, delicacy, beauty, durability, warmth, and strength are incomparable, can be produced in any mulk other than Kashmir is unthinkable…. While journeying through Ladakh to Turkistan, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani discovered the warmth and fineness of pashmina. He brought back some shawl wool with himself to Kashmir, where he had arrived to spread the true message of Islam, and had a bale of pattu made from it. Sultan Qutubuddin was amazed by the durability and fineness of the cloth, and began to have bales of pattu woven from the wool every year. Then the elite began to wear clothes of pattu.[125]

The text then proceeds to detail the expansion of shawl manufacture through Mughal, Afghan, Sikh, and Dogra rule, concluding with the note that the shawl trade declined after the Franco-Prussian war due to God's punishment of the dissolute lifestyle of the wealthy shawl manufacturers.[126] The volume thus related Kashmir's geographical location to its people's ability to produce fine goods, which was inserted into the larger narrative of Kashmir's transformation into an Islamic landscape. This was accomplished by linking the emergence of Kashmir's most famous manufacture to its most significant religious preceptor, and its demise to moral degeneration.

Tarikh-i Hassan's narrative of Kashmir's political past, similarly, is located in a global context; it traces the historical trajectories of each of the imperial entities that made Kashmir part of their empires, such

as the Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and Dogras, from their origins to the contemporary moment in detail. Moreover, it aligns different historical trajectories and views with particular groups of people. The volume begins with an attempt to determine the age of the world. According to the text, different communities—Jews, worshippers of fire, worshippers of natural forces, Brahmans, and Muslims—had a variety of opinions regarding when the world came into existence. The text notes that since there was no agreement on the subject, it was difficult to come to an accurate conclusion.[127] Given the existence of historical remnants from five to six thousand years, it was clear that there were different kinds of people (*adam*) in the world, some made from wind, some from fire, and others from the earth itself.[128] As a result of the confusion regarding the emergence of the world and its early inhabitants, according to the text, Kashmiri historians had begun their histories from Kalyug, although there was evidence to suggest that Kashmir had many rulers before Kalyug, such as Sri Ramachandra, who had built several temples in Kashmir.[129]

There is a greater emphasis in *Tarikh-i Hassan* than in earlier tarikhs, as noted earlier, in identifying the past of Kashmiri Muslims as a community within the narrative of Kashmir's political and spiritual past. Thus the idea that Kashmir was an Islamic landscape populated by generations of mystics, whose collective blessings shaped it in the past, present, and future, is quite apparent throughout the text. Nonetheless, *Tarikh-i Hassan*'s volumes on geography, Sufi mystics, and Persian poets do not deny Kashmir the status of sacred space and a repository of literary knowledge prior to its transition to Islam. On receiving the request to compose the geography of Kashmir, Hassan in turn requested the Prime Minister, Anant Ram, to order a Kashmiri Pandit to translate Sanskrit texts such as the *Nilamata Purana* for him, so that he could include the sacred places of Hindus into his text.[130] In its section on Rishis in volume three, the text notes that Islam fit naturally on Kashmir's spiritual landscape because Kashmir had already been the land of these beings who had withdrawn from material life and dedicated themselves to meditation and spiritual pursuits. The fame of

Kashmir as a sacred space could not stay hidden for long from the spiritual giants of Islam, who eventually made their way there and converted the Rishis with the force of their spirituality.[131]

Similarly, although the volume on the poets of Kashmir is limited to a chronological listing (with brief discussions) of Muslim poets of Persian in Kashmir, thereby ignoring Pandit poets of Persian, as well as poets of Kashmiri, it does not present Kashmir as a literary *tabula rasa* before the emergence of Persian on its literary landscape. Indeed, it acknowledges the influence of Kashmir's natural and narrative landscape on Persian once it became the literary language. The very beginning of the volume notes that:

> Kashmir was a centre of knowledge and education since the time of its habitation by humans. With the advent of the Aryans, ancient Kashmir produced scholars of the Vedas, and once Sanskrit emerged as the literary language, Kashmiris took its study and learning to great heights, producing mature and renowned scholars of Sanskrit…. The unique literary sensibilities nurtured by the Sanskrit litterateurs left a deep imprint on the Persian language and allowed it to flourish in Kashmir. It was because of this that Kashmir's Persian poets produced verses of high caliber that could rival poetry from Persia itself, not just in terms of style, but also in terms of content.[132]

Here the entity—Kashmir—that had thus far been imagined through its narrative tradition, was now imagining its own literary past, the distinctiveness of which was rooted in the continuous thread between its Sanskrit and Persian literary traditions.

Kashmir's historical tradition had come full circle. Kashmir was now a political territory within a global context with an identifiable spiritual and political, as well as a literary past, and its people a distinct community categorized into groups according to their religious affiliations. Even as its influences became more eclectic and it drew on a number of universal traditions, the narrative tradition's definitions of Kashmir and its people became ever more specific and factual. *Tarikh-i Kabir* (1899–1900), another multivolume history of Kashmir in Persian, for instance, begins its volume on Kashmir's political history with a meticulous record of each of the traditions related to Kashmir's origin that are specifically concerned with how it came to be named Kashmir.[133] Nonetheless,

despite being located within specific time periods and presented in a more geographical vocabulary, these traditions were still iterations of the same stories regarding Kashmir's origins that had been circulating in its textual and oral traditions for centuries. In the context of the turn of the twentieth century, moreover, the invocation of Kashmir's history as distinct and continuous, and the narration of these and other traditions regarding Kashmir's geography, landscape, rulers, mystics, *and* its people, was a means of staking an autonomous space for the region and its people in a global sphere.

Narrating the Political History of Kashmir and Its People

The foregoing discussion makes it clear that nineteenth-century narratives were narrating not just the past of the territory, now defined through the language of geography, but also its people. After the decline of Mughal rule in the mid-eighteenth century, instead of becoming an autonomous entity, Kashmir became part of the Afghan Empire, the Sikh kingdom, and finally, a princely state under the control of the Dogras and the suzerainty of the British Empire. The late-eighteenth-century tarikhs had already begun the tradition of lamenting the negative impact of these imperial transformations on Kashmir and Kashmiris. The nineteenth-century tarikhs, in turn, would attempt to reposition Kashmir's—and through it negotiate the Kashmiri people's—relationship to the state government, British India, and Hindustan in the present, partly by redefining its relationships to the state and imperial entities in the past. As a result, the vocabulary of conquest became very much a part of the narrative of Kashmir's past, as these texts presented Kashmir and its people as unwillingly drawn into larger imperial entities. Thus history-writing performed, as Heiko Frese argues in the case of nineteenth-century vernacular chronicles from Orissa, an 'expressive function, giving voice to ambivalence about, and resentment towards, a newly-dominant power'.[134]

This is apparent in the way that *Wajiz ul-Tawarikh* narrates Kashmir's transition to Mughal and Dogra rule. As we have seen in the previous chapter, while Mughals were seen as outsiders, historians of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Kashmir were rather ambivalent towards Mughal intervention, which was attributed to the conditions created by the sectarian and political dissension amongst Kashmir's nobility. While Khanyari's text too attributes the intervention to some extent to Kashmir's internal problems, it places the initiative for the conquest on the Mughals themselves, especially Emperor Akbar. According to the text:

> During the reign of Sultan Ali Shah, Qazi Sadruddin and Maulana Ashiqi came from Akbar badshah's court to ask for the Sultan's niece's hand in marriage to Prince Salim. Ali Shah had coins struck and the khutba [prayers] read in Akbar badshah's name. In reality, the two men were Akbar badshah's spies and had been sent to Kashmir to learn about people's customs and traditions and its political conditions. Once they returned, they told Akbar badshah what they had learned. At this time snowfall destroyed the shali [rice] crop and famine stalked the land.[135]

Further, the text notes that when Akbar ordered Sultan Yusuf Shah to make an appearance at his court, the latter sent his son Haider Shah with gifts for the emperor. On seeing these gifts, Akbar began to desire Kashmir even more and reignited his efforts to acquire the Valley.[136] In the end, Khanyari does note that it was the religious discord created by Sultan Yacub Shah's policies that led Sunni elders to approach Akbar and invite him to occupy Kashmir under the terms of an agreement (first mentioned in *Waqiat-i Kashmir*).[137]

Although the text presents Mughal rule in a generally positive light, that Kashmir was a part of the kingdoms of Hindustan's rulers since ancient times is specifically challenged in the context of the Afghan governor, Sukh Jeewan's, actions. According to Khanyari, Sukh Jeewan declared his independence from the Afghan Empire by linking himself to the Mughal emperor and presenting Kashmir as the natural inheritance of the rulers of Hindustan. Thus his rule over Kashmir was entirely illegitimate, since Kashmir had not been a part of Hindustan before the rule of the Mughal emperors.[138]

The text notes that the end of Afghan rule heralded the end of Muslim rule in Kashmir, which had lasted for 499 solar years. It focuses on the anti-Muslim religious policies of the Sikhs, such as the resumption of jagirs, the closure of the Jama Masjid, the banning of the *azan* and cow slaughter, as well as the severe punishments meted out by Sikh governors to those contravening these laws. For instance, the text describes in detail an incident in which two Muslims were executed for cow-slaughter and their bodies dragged through the streets of Srinagar.[139] The decline of the Sikhs and the advent of the Dogras on Kashmir's political landscape are presented as inevitable events in the light of the Anglo-Sikh wars. Unlike during the Mughal or even Sikh conquests, when Kashmiris played a role—if only a negative one—in facilitating its occupation, there is a sense in the text that Dogra rule was a result of circumstances that had little to do with Kashmir's internal politics, and were therefore outside the control of Kashmiris. Thus Kashmir was sold by the British to Gulab Singh for a sum of Rs. 75 lakhs under the terms of the treaty of Amritsar.[140] Although the text does not overtly criticize the Dogra rulers, Khanyari's discussion of the early Dogra period is a litany of misrule by their officials—such as through grain hoarding and tax hikes on shawl manufacture—and the resultant epidemics and famines in this period. In fact, the text ends abruptly with a description of the famine and people's outcry against Wazir Pannu's policies.[141]

On the other hand, Khasta's *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*, as we have seen, drew Kashmir's past as a whole into the ambit of the history of India, defining it as a princely state within the British Indian Empire, with Pandits as its original inhabitants, and Islam as an imposition on them through force and conquest. As a result, the text attempts to claim early Kashmir's rulers as rulers of Hindustan, such as Raja Ashoka, who, it argues, was the same individual as the ruler of the Mauryan Empire.[142] In addition, according to the text, the last Hindu ruler, Sahadev, was a '*namard*' (unmanly) whose cowardice led to the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate in Kashmir.[143] Not surprisingly, the text condemns Sultan Sikandar for his destruction of temples and anti-Hindu policies,[144] while praising Sultan Zain ul-

Abidin as a paragon of virtue, especially in his policies to end the oppression of Hindus and enhance scholarship in all languages in Kashmir.[145]

Nonetheless, it was during Zain ul-Abidin's rule, according to *Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir*, that Pandits became proficient in Persian and took to government service, because they were forced to by the Muslim religious elites:

> One day, the prince was on a boat near Ali Kadal, where he saw a Brahmani with a pot of water on her head. He threw a stone at the pot, which broke, but the water did not spill. When she came home and informed her father of the incident, the Brahman cursed the prince, who fell gravely ill. The Sultan came to seek the Brahman's forgiveness on his son's behalf. Ultimately, the Brahman forgave the prince and his pleas to God to cure the prince were accepted. The muftis and qazis of Kashmir were very upset by this incident, and as retaliation against the Brahmans, they forced them to eat stale food and learn Persian. From henceforward, those Brahmans who took up the study of Persian came to be employed as karkun.[146]

It is very likely that this story was taken from Kachru's text, which is the first textual narrative in which it makes an appearance. It was clearly an attempt, in both texts, to explain why Kashmiri Pandits took up employment under Muslim rulers.

Tawarikh-i Guldasta-i Kashmir described the advent of Dogra rule in Kashmir as the beginning of the age of civilization and progress. According to Khasta, just as the British had used their wisdom and foresight to transform themselves from traders to the rulers of India by defeating its Muslim rulers, so too the Suryavanshi Gulab Singh had acquired Kashmir through his loyalty and sagacity.[147] His son, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, was a devout Hindu and at the same time tolerant of all faiths and took care of all his subjects as his own children.[148] Khasta noted that rulers needed to be aware that their rule depended on God's grace, which in turn was determined by their own deeds. Accordingly, he listed twenty-eight qualities of a good king, using past rulers as examples for behaviour that should be emulated and avoided. The list included warnings against advisers who created dissent, prejudice, and pride in dealings with

subjects, and wasting money on revelries.[149] The text presented Ranbir Singh as embodying all the virtues of a good king.

Tarikh-i Hassan, as seen in the earlier discussion, struck a more neutral tone, claiming Kashmir as an Islamic space while acknowledging its pre-Islamic literary and spiritual legacies. Interestingly, it traces the establishment of Dogra rule in Kashmir to the emergence of British rule in the subcontinent, which in turn it traces to the decline of Mughal rule in the eighteenth century. It laments the breakdown of central authority under one emperor leading to the rule of nawabs in Bengal and Lucknow, Ranjit Singh in the Punjab, Marathas in western India, and Rohillas in various regions, which allowed the British sahibs to occupy all of Hindustan.[150] The text devotes an entire section to the occupation of the mulks of Hindustan, Punjab, and Kashmir by the British, whose rise, according to the text, could be traced to the invention of the compass, their subsequent oceanic travels to faraway lands, the emergence of the East India Company, and its role in the occupation of Hindustan.[151] This is not surprising, given that by the late nineteenth century, the colonial state, albeit through the Dogra court, was making its presence felt in Kashmir.

Most importantly, thus, the text alludes to a link between the Company's conquest of the Punjab (and the help rendered to the Company by Gulab Singh) and the establishment of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir in its discussion of the rule of the Jammu rajas over Kashmir. This section, however, does not directly critique Dogra rule, and it even goes so far as to praise Maharaja Gulab Singh for restoring order in Kashmir after a period of dissension and chaos under Sikh rule, and his son, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, for his charitable and scholarly activities.[152] It does note, however, that Dogra rule ushered in good times for Hindus and bad times for Muslims of Kashmir, as the Dogra rulers resumed jagirs of prominent Muslim families and denied them administrative positions in the new government. So even though not overtly stated, giving voice to the contemporary claims of the Kashmiri Muslim community in light of the past was of paramount importance to *Tarikh-i Hassan*.

Ultimately, these texts collectively raised two related questions, albeit implicitly: how was Kashmir as a polity to be envisioned, especially within the larger imperial framework of British India; and who would represent the majority of Kashmiris given that their immediate rulers not only did not share their religion, but were also outsiders? The latter was hardly novel in the history of Kashmir, and therefore it is not surprising that these texts attempted to provide answers to these questions by shedding some light on Kashmir's relationship with its imperial overlords in the past using the language of subjugation. However, not only did the answers cast the history of Kashmir in terms of Kashmir and Hindustan, as well as Kashmiris and outsiders, but also in terms of Hindus and Muslims.

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The texts I have discussed in this chapter were not produced in an academic context, and their authors were not professional historians; yet they clearly saw their role as narrators of history. Although the texts had multiple objectives for narrating the past, nineteenth-century Kashmir's historical tradition as a whole was much more aware of and engaged with modern methods of historical research and modern styles of historical composition. At the same time, it remained firmly embedded within Kashmir's tradition of historical narration, displaying, to borrow Farina Mir's phrase, a 'self-conscious literary historicity'.[153] To an extent, the continuity can be explained by the fact that the authors of the texts were drawn from the same social classes that were tied to Sufi mystical traditions and hospices rather than the court, as the authors of earlier Persian tarikhs and tazkiras, and they continued to compose in Persian. Their texts were one of many purveyors of popular memory about the past of the land and its people which was part of an intricate web that connected oral, textual, manuscript, and printed sources in multiple languages. The past continued to be regarded as both tradition and history, with tradition now markedly placed in historical time; and yet, recording tradition as history did not involve a sense of alienation or disconnectedness from the past.

Even as Persian continued to be the medium for textually recording Kashmir's history, and even as it continued to be the language in which its literary past was imagined, the vernacularity of nineteenth-century tarikhs came from their location at the intersection of multilingual narrative and historical traditions, including Kashmiri poetry and Urdu vernacular culture, and to a lesser extent, even English texts. Furthermore, these narratives were critical to marking the contours of Kashmir's historical tradition and creating an archive of acceptable sources for the study of Kashmir's past. Most significantly, their goal was to give voice to the category of people as a political community, rendered as such because they were the inhabitants of the sacred space and geographically defined territory of Kashmir with an identifiable past and a continuous historical tradition. This geographical territory, while still imagined as part of a universal Islamic landscape, as in earlier texts, was now recognizable as a specific polity within the multitude of polities in the global sphere. Collectively, thus, these texts presented the people of Kashmir as far more than merely subjects of the newly constituted princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Delineating the differences among the people in the past, along sectarian and religious lines, moreover, allowed the narratives to make political claims on behalf of specific groups in the present.

Hassan wrote the volume on Persian poets in Kashmir partly because by the late nineteenth century Persian was in decline in Kashmir. In deep distress over this, he noted that in his day Persian 'poets had become rare like the proverbial *huma* [mythological bird]; while the atmosphere was reverberating with the cries of the owls'.[154] Thus the volume was an elegy, meant to serve as a record and reminder of Kashmir's illustrious literary past in this universal, yet deeply vernacular language. In 1889, Maharaja Pratap Singh declared Urdu as the court language (and subsequently the language of administration), officially ending state patronage of Persian.[155] As the Dogra state's educational system replaced local makhtabs and *pathshala*s, where Persian and Sanskrit education had been imparted even in rural areas, Persian linguistic and literary culture gradually lost its hold in Kashmir. Kashmiri, completely ignored by the state, continued to operate within the poetic and oral

realms. Pirs and other members of the theological classes who had been at the forefront of sustaining a Persian scribal culture took up positions in the state educational system as Urdu teachers, while Kashmiri Pandits who had been Persian scribes or Sanskrit scholars turned to learning English and assisting orientalists in their Indological endeavours.

Although Persian manuscript culture continued to an extent into the early twentieth century and it remained the language in which court petitions were written,[156] it could no longer sustain a historiographical tradition. The last multivolume Persian history in the tradition of *Tarikh-i Hassan*, entitled *Tarikh-i Kabir*, was written in Kashmir between 1899 and 1900. Composed by Muhammad Haji Mohiuddin Miskeen, the text followed the general pattern and content of Hassan's text, other than placing the volumes in a different order. The first volume of the text was devoted to the saints and divine personages of Kashmir, followed by a volume on political history, and ending with a volume on its geography and chief features.[157] The new Kashmiri Muslim leadership that emerged in early-twentieth-century Kashmir, trained in British India and comfortable in Urdu, was far more interested in gaining a foothold in the educational and administrative system of the Dogra state than in agitating for the cause of the Kashmiri language or Kashmir's narrative tradition. The absence of an officially recognized regional vernacular that could be tied to the local educational system (which was by the early twentieth century focused on Urdu and English), or a nascent political movement, further ensured that Kashmir's historiographical tradition was not relocated and continued within an academic setting. As a result, history did not emerge as a professional discipline in Kashmir until much later in the post-independence era.

By the early twentieth century, instead, the locus for historical production on Kashmir shifted to other arenas, such as the Punjab, which is not surprising given the growing influence of British India on the politics of Kashmir. Muhammadin Fauq (1877–1945), a Punjabi of Kashmiri descent, was one of a handful of individuals who wrote histories of Kashmir in this period. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Fauq became deeply involved in Punjabi

organizations, such as the Kashmiri Muslim Conference, that agitated for the cause of Kashmiri Muslims within Kashmir.[158] Through his massive undertaking that resulted in the publication of *Tarikh-i Akhwam-i Kashmir* (History of the People of Kashmir), Fauq crystallized the idea of viewing Kashmir's past through its people, who were, furthermore, identified primarily as members of distinct religious communities.[159] This Urdu text, first published in 1914, followed by a new edition in 1934, divided Kashmir's people into Pandits, Muslims (who were further subdivided into categories such as Sayyids, Afghans, Sheikhs, Mughals, and Rajputs), Sikhs, Doms, and so on.[160] Within each category, the text closely followed the genealogy of every family by name from its origins to the contemporary moment. It was the people and their genealogies that drove forward the narrative of the region's past, as the text plugged them into Kashmir's well-established historical narrative. For instance, the section on the Muslims of Kashmir begins with the first Muslim to have set foot in Kashmir, which the text identifies as Shaykh Bulbul Shah, the Sufi mystic who converted the ruler of Kashmir, Rinchen, to Islam.[161]

Fauq conducted innumerable interviews and wrote hundreds of letters to individuals asking them for their family histories, many of which he received, alongside researching Kashmir's vast historical repertoire, in an attempt to compose what he saw as an encyclopedic compendium about the people of Kashmir. As a result, although presented in a factual, objective mode, *Tarikh-i Akhwam* is nonetheless steeped in popular stories and memories, much like earlier Persian tarikhs and tazkiras from Kashmir. However, unlike these earlier texts, which saw themselves as continuations of a longer narrative tradition, and more importantly connected to the past itself, *Tarikh-i Akhwam* clearly placed itself outside this tradition, as well as the past. Instead, Fauq rendered these texts, stories, interviews, and letters into sources to construct what he deemed was a legitimate and dispassionate history of the people of Kashmir. This had the effect of deracinating texts such as *Rajatarangini*, as well as Persian historical narratives such as *Waqiat-i Kashmir* and *Tarikh-i Hassan*—three texts Fauq relied on extensively—from

Kashmir's narrative tradition, in effect 'communalizing' them. These texts were no longer part of a larger whole, but were rather 'Hindu' or 'Muslim' texts, tied to 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' communities and to be read as such.

The move to regard Kashmir's Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions as distinct entities, rather than deeply interconnected traditions, had begun in earnest with the explorations of a series of orientalists and Indologists into Kashmir's classical past in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Focusing especially on Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, these efforts elevated the narrative to a 'national' text which was foundational to the construction of India's historical narrative, rather than simply Kashmir's past. The next chapter examines *Rajatarangini*'s transformation from a Kashmiri text into a quintessentially Hindu and Indian narrative in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which led to its disappearance (along with the Persian tradition that had preserved its memory) from the discourse of Kashmiri nationalism. The continued circulation of stories from the Sanskrit and Persian traditions in Kashmir's narrative culture through the nineteenth century, and well into the present, forms the subject of Chapter 5.

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[1] See, for instance, K. Chatterjee (2009b); Aquil and Chatterjee (2008); Deshpande (2007); Murphy (2007); Sreenivasan (2007); Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam (2001).

[2] P. Chatterjee, 'Introduction', in Aquil and Chatterjee (2008), pp. 19, 21–2.

[3] For Bengal, see Chakrabarty (2008), pp. 143–68; for Maharashtra, see Deshpande (2007); for Assam, see Saikia (2008b), pp. 473–507.

[4] See, in particular, Deshpande (2007); Saikia (2008b), pp. 473–507; Purkayastha, 'Restructuring the Past in Twentieth-Century Assam', in Aquil and Chatterjee (2008), pp. 172–208.

[5] For vernacular history as a counter to academic history, see P. Chatterjee, 'Introduction', in Aquil and Chatterjee (2008), pp. 1–24.

[6] To name a few: Jayyid, *Khilafatnama* (1866), which was written in verse; Ram, *Gulabnama*, trans. Charak (1977); Ram, *Gulzar-i Kashmir* (1870).

[7] There were at least a hundred *katib*s (scribes) in Srinagar in the 1830s and Persian manuscripts were readily available for purchase. See Vigne, vol. I (1842),

p. 375. In addition, Maharaja Ranbir Singh (r. 1858–85) patronized several Persian calligraphers at his court, many of whom were Kashmiri Pandits. See Ibrahim (1997), pp. 57–8.

[8] The *Akbarnama* was written in the style of Firdausi's *Shahnama*. It was rendered into Kashmiri later in the century by the poet Wahab Pare. On Shahabadi and the *Akbarnama*, see Tikku (1971), p. 204; Zutshi (2004), pp. 41–4; Shah (1959), pp. 75–84; and Hajini, 'An Outline of the Growth of Various Forms in Kashmiri Literature', in Kalla (1985), p. 37.

[9] Tikku (1971), p. 213.

[10] Digby (1964), p. 96; Sufi, vol. II (1974), p. 487.

[11] Bhat (1984), pp. 8–10; Tikku (1971), pp. 195–201, 215. See also Mattoo (1978), pp. 479–86. Kachru's history is sometimes referred to as *Majma-at Tawarikh* in secondary sources.

[12] Bhat (1984), pp. 10–11.

[13] Tikku (1971), pp. 215–25.

[14] Bhat (1984), p. 12.

[15] Alam (2004), pp. 179–85.

[16] Aazim (1991), p. 5; Bamzai (1962), pp. 735–9; Hajini, 'An Outline of the Growth of Various Forms', in Kalla (1985), p. 37; Masterji (1958), pp. 26–9; Kaul (1956), pp. 228–30.

[17] Lone (1996), pp. 191–2.

[18] Tikku (1971), p. 234. In the late eighteenth century, Baba Muhammad Kamal of Chrar Sharif (Nund Rishi's shrine), wrote *Reshi Nama* and *Noor Nama* in Persian prose and poetry respectively. Both texts recorded the bulk of Nund Rishi's verses and commented on them. In 1840, Baba Muhammad Khalil, also of Chrar Sharif, wrote *Rauzat-ur Riaz*, a Persian rendition of Nund Rishi's verses, as well as ghazals in praise of the Rishi by the author. Manuscript collections of Nund Rishi's verses, known as *Noornama*s, which had previously been the sole domain of the caretakers of his shrine at Chrar, came to be more widely circulated during this period. See Gauhar (2009), pp. 15–16; Gauhar (1988), p. 73. Likewise, that manuscript collections of Lal Ded's sayings, known as *Lallavakyani*, were circulating in Kashmir's manuscript culture in the nineteenth century is evident from the fact that two such collections were acquired by Georg Buhler on his tour to collect Sanskrit manuscripts in Kashmir between 1875 and 1876. See Buhler (1877), pp. li, 90.

[19] Aazim (1991), p. 4. This illustrates that Kashmiri verse was written for performance and popular consumption. As noted by Joshua Duke of the Indian

Medical Service during his travels through Kashmir, Mahmud Gami's verses were 'constantly quoted by bards and others'. See Duke (1888), p. 33.

[20] Aazim (1991), pp. 2–3.

[21] Raina (1972), pp. 2–3.

[22] Zutshi (2004), pp. 136–7, 151–4.

[23] Hajini (1954), pp. 4, 7–9.

[24] Biographical information on Khuihami is culled from the following: Koul (1913), pp. 195–7; Shah, 'Introduction', in Khuihami, vol. 1 (1954), pp. 1–6; Anon. (1956), pp. 243–4; Khan (1978), pp. 487–500; Fazili (1983), pp. 17–35.

[25] Shah, 'Introduction', in Khuihami, vol. 1 (1954), pp. 2–3; Koul (1913), pp. 195–6.

[26] Shah, 'Introduction', in Khuihami, vol. 1 (1954), p. 4.

[27] Koul (1913), pp. 196–7. In his book, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Lawrence made a brief mention of Hassan, stating, 'What else I have learnt I owe to Pir Hassan Shah, a learned Kashmiri, whose work lies entirely among the villagers.' See Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 454.

[28] Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 179.

[29] Pampore (1989), pp. 28–9.

[30] Khasta (1994) [1877], pp. 9–10.

[31] Pampore (1989), pp. 32–3.

[32] Ibid., 40; see also, Zutshi (2004), pp. 187–8.

[33] Khasta (1994) [1877], pp. 12–13.

[34] Pampore (1989), pp. 40–1.

[35] Khasta (1994) [1877], pp. 14–15.

[36] Bhat (1984), p. 20. See also Mattoo (1978), pp. 479–86.

[37] Kachru (1846), pp. 304–5ff.

[38] Ibid., pp. 6ff.

[39] Kachru (1846), pp. 3ff.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., pp. 6–8ff.

[42] Kachru (1846), pp. 304–5ff.

[43] Ibid., pp. 73ff.

[44] Ibid., pp. 70–2ff.

[45] Ibid., pp. 341ff. The ephemeral nature of power must have been particularly apparent to Kachru as Kashmir passed from Afghan to Sikh rule, and then to Dogra rule within the first few decades of the nineteenth century.

[46] Kachru (1846), pp. 96–8ff.

[47] Ibid., pp. 99–100ff.

[48] Khanyari, trans. Lone (2006), pp. 1–2.

[49] Ibid., pp. 2–3.

[50] Khanyari, trans. Lone (2006), pp. 22–3.

[51] Ibid., p. 38.

[52] Ibid., p. 39.

[53] Ibid., p. 42.

[54] R. C. Dutt recognized the value of the 'lays and songs' and other oral traditions as sources for composing a 'real' history of the people of India. See R. C. Dutt (1880), pp. 5, 12–13. For a longer discussion, see the next chapter.

[55] Khanyari, trans. Lone (2006), pp. 11–19.

[56] Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 11.

[57] Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 127.

[58] Ibid., p. 128.

[59] Ibid., p. 129.

[60] Ibid., p. 16.

[61] Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 11.

[62] Elliot and Dowson (1966) [1867].

[63] Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 334.

[64] Khasta (1994) [1877], pp. 115–16.

[65] Ibid., p. 11.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Khan (1978), pp. 487–500. In addition, Shamsuddin Ahmed retitled *Tarikh-i Hassan* as the 'Sun of all Histories' in his Urdu and Kashmiri translations of volumes one and two of the text. See Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003); Khuihami, vol. II, trans. Ahmed (1999).

[68] Berkwitz (2004), p. 96.

[69] Shah, 'Introduction', in Khuihami, vol. I (1954), p. 20.

[70] For a longer discussion of community formation among Kashmiri Muslims in the late nineteenth century, see Zutshi (2004), esp. chs 3–4.

[71] Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003), pp. 38–9.

[72] Ibid., p. 39.

[73] Ibid., p. 41.

[74] Ibid., p. 42.

[75] Ibid., pp. 161–206.

[76] Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003), p. 42.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., p. 40.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003), pp. 40–1.

[81] Ibid., p. 41.

[82] Ibid.

[83] A later multivolume Persian historical narrative, *Tarikh-i Kabir* (1899–1900), also includes Kashmir's histories as part of its volume on Kashmir's geographical features and other characteristics. Miskeen (1899–1900), pp. 35–6ff.

[84] Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003), pp. 368–9. Kalhana mentions the first three of these authors—Bholaraja, Padma Mehr, and Kshemendra—as his sources in his introduction to *Rajatarangini*. Jonaraja, Srivara, and Prajyabhatta were authors of the Sanskrit continuations of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*.

[85] Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003), p. 370.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., p. 372.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003), p. 41.

[91] Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003), pp. 697–8.

[92] Khuihami, vol. III, trans. Kabir (undated), p. 3.

[93] Ibid., pp. 480–3.

[94] Khuihami, vol. III, trans. Kabir (undated), p. 1.

[95] Ibid., pp. 2–3.

[96] Ibid., p. 6.

[97] Khuihami, vol. III, trans. Kabir (undated), pp. 164–9.

[98] For instance, see ibid., pp. 15–16.

[99] Ibid., p. 102.

[100] Ibid., pp. 115–24.

[101] Ibid., pp. 115–16.

[102] Ibid., p. 124.

[103] Kachru (1846), pp. 17–18ff.

[104] Ibid., pp. 19–20ff. The seventh-century *Nilamata Purana* recounts this story in detail. As Mahesh Sharma has argued, the *Nilamata Purana* glorified Kashmir and created the idea of its landscape as uniquely sacred, while at the same time drawing it into larger subcontinental cosmologies. Its resurrection as a source for nineteenth-century historical narratives is thus telling. See Sharma (2008), pp. 123–45.

[105] Kachru (1846), pp. 201ff.

[106] Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 11.

[107] Ibid., p. 17.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid., p. 18.

[110] Ibid., pp. 20–1.

[111] Khasta (1994) [1877], pp. 32–5.

[112] Ibid., pp. 86–7.

[113] Ibid., p. 26.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid., p. 29.

[116] Khasta (1994) [1877], pp. 336–68.

[117] Khuihami, vol. I, trans. Ahmed (2003), pp. 45–54.

[118] Ibid., pp. 54–6.

[119] Ibid., pp. 57–74.

[120] Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 74.

[121] Ibid., pp. 76–7.

[122] Ibid., pp. 77–8.

[123] Ibid., p. 79.

[124] Khasta (1994) [1877], pp. 79–83.

[125] Ibid., p. 357.

[126] Ibid., pp. 358–9.

[127] Khuihami, vol. II, trans. Ahmed (1999), pp. 24–30.

[128] Ibid., p. 32.

[129] Ibid., pp. 34–5.

[130] Shah, 'Introduction', in Khuihami, vol. I (1954), p. 5.

[131] Khuihami, vol. III, trans. Kabir (undated), p. 102.

[132] Ibid., p. 497.

[133] Miskeen (1899–1900), pp. 4–5ff.

[134] Frese (2012), p. 256.

[135] Khanyari, trans. Lone (2006), pp. 134–5.

[136] Ibid., p. 140.

[137] Ibid., pp. 143–4.

[138] Khanyari, trans. Lone (2006), p. 201.

[139] Ibid., pp. 239–41.

[140] Ibid., pp. 252–4.

[141] Ibid., pp. 255–6.

[142] Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 138.

[143] Ibid., p. 318.

[144] Ibid., pp. 241–3.

[145] Ibid., pp. 246–54.

[146] Ibid., p. 250.

[147] Ibid., pp. 336–7.

[148] Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 368.

[149] Ibid., pp. 328–32.

[150] Khuihami, vol. II, trans. Ahmed (1999), pp. 725–6.

[151] Ibid., pp. 891–4.

[152] Khuihami, vol. II, trans. Ahmed (1999), pp. 937–49.

[153] Mir uses this phrase to describe a new development in Punjabi *qissa* literature in the early nineteenth century, when poets self-consciously 'placed themselves within a Punjabi literary tradition'. Mir (2010), p. 9.

[154] Pushp, 'Introductory', in Khuihami, vol. IV (1961), p. 15.

[155] Zutshi (2004), p. 176.

[156] 'Letter from Khan Sahib Maulvi Mohamad Husain, Judge High Court, Jammu and Kashmir State, to Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir State', May 9, 1907, Old English Records 1907/27/Z–6, Jammu State Archives; Sufi, vol. II (1974), pp. 812–13.

[157] Miskeen, *Tarikh-i Kabir* (Amritsar: Suraj Prakash Press, undated); Miskeen (1899–1900).

[158] Sultanpuri, *Shiraza: Fauq Number* 17 (undated), pp. 56–7.

[159] Fauq, vol. I (1996) [1934]. Fauq wrote another history of Kashmir, entitled *Mukammal Tarikh-i Kashmir*, which was first published in 1910. See Fauq, trans. Bharti (2009).

[160] The first edition of the book did not include Kashmiri Pandits; the revised edition included Kashmiri Pandits, as well as pictures of individuals and families.

[161] Fauq, vol. I (1996) [1934], p. 126.

4

THE MULTIPLE LIVES OF *RAJATARANGINI*

Orientalist and Nationalist Knowledge Production in Kashmir and Colonial India

For the Persian historical tradition in Kashmir from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, *Rajatarangini* was not merely a single text, but was the embodiment of Kashmir's indigenous narrative tradition. The Persian texts' engagement with this tradition encapsulates their understanding of history-writing in general, and Kashmir's past more specifically, as both a continuous set of narrative practices to be emulated, as well as a collection of historical facts. Further, it highlights the continuities and ruptures within the long tradition of historical composition in Kashmir. Drawing its sense of place and time from Sanskrit narratives, the Persian historical tradition nevertheless redefined these ideas by its participation in a more trans-local literary imagination. Long after the decline of Sanskrit within Kashmir's literary landscape, thus, the Sanskrit narrative tradition embodied by *Rajatarangini* and its continuations remained firmly embedded within and continued to shape its vernacular (Persian) historical culture.

By the late nineteenth century, however, a series of orientalist projects aimed at unearthing Kashmir's Sanskrit texts, and through them its classical past, had set in motion the process of deracinating *Rajatarangini*, and the Sanskrit tradition more broadly, from Kashmir's narrative context, particularly from the long and continuous Persian historical tradition. This had two related consequences: first, *Rajatarangini*—subjected to a feverish search

for its original, authentic manuscript—emerged from this process as a single text composed by an author at a particular moment in time and as a primary source for a reconstruction of India's—and within it Kashmir's—ancient past. The 'fuzzy and approximate' sense of time, and even authorship, that had allowed it to remain an integral part of the indigenous narrative tradition, was now replaced by a defined date for its composition (1148–9) by Kalhana, who was identified as the poet-historian of Kashmir. Second, its production was viewed as an act of historical composition with no parallels elsewhere in the subcontinent, or for that matter, even in Kashmir itself. This relegated the Persian narrative tradition that followed to merely imitative status, partly contributing to its severe marginalization and ultimate demise by the early decades of the twentieth century.[1] These and other factors, discussed in the previous chapter, ensured the absence of the emergence of history as an academic discipline in Kashmir.

This chapter charts in detail the orientalist and (Indian) nationalist knowledge production projects through which Kashmir's Sanskrit tradition was decontextualized and hitched to the service of colonial and national master narratives regarding India's past. Scholarship on colonial knowledge production in South Asia has rarely taken Kashmir into account as an arena where such projects were undertaken, partly because of its status as a princely state. Regardless of the reasons, I would suggest that a study of the *Rajatarangini* project in nineteenth-century Kashmir yields rich insights into the contextual nature of colonial knowledge production projects in South Asia. These projects were informed by locally produced knowledge, even as they attempted to subsume (and thereby erase) that knowledge within more universal categories.

The critical role played by native informants in this process cannot be denied, but rather than taking sides in the well-worn native agency versus colonial power debate, I am more interested in studying the complex networks through which indigenous Kashmiri, orientalist, and nationalist ideas interacted with and influenced each other.[2] In other words, the fact that the outcome of this project radically altered Kashmir's narrative and political cultures should not be allowed to mask the more nuanced nature of the process itself

that led to the final result. As Rama Mantena has recently argued in the context of colonial South India, 'the emergence of new practices of history was conditioned by the *encounter* between British and Indian intellectual practices'.[3] In her view, the term 'encounter' captures the relationship between European and indigenous practices and individuals, without losing sight of the power dynamic, and the 'exclusionary strategies that kept Indian mediaries at bay from inclusion into a global scholarly community'.[4]

Further, a closer look at Kashmir as a site for historical knowledge production through the interlinked projects of producing a critical edition of *Rajatarangini* and translating it into English illustrates the close kinship between the orientalist and nationalist projects in colonial India. Not only did the two projects have similar ideological inheritances, but as significantly, both projects were internally differentiated and engaged with *Rajatarangini* in complex ways. This engagement was not simply at the level of reading it as a text that most closely adhered to the standards of a nineteenth-century positivist history, but rather on multiple levels that reveal the variety of ways in which ideas of history, literature, region, and nation were defined in relation to each other in this period. Thus in some ways, the process of *Rajatarangini*'s transformation into a colonial-national text through its English (and some Hindi) translations, cannot be viewed as unique. It may not have been an actual part of Kashmir's long narrative tradition of engaging with the *Rajatarangini* corpus, and it ultimately wrested *Rajatarangini* from its regional moorings. Nonetheless, it was a parallel attempt at translating and understanding the text that lay, much like the indigenous tradition, at the intersection of multiple temporal, spatial, literary, linguistic, and historical ideas.

History and Philology in Nineteenth-Century Kashmir

Scholarship on the colonial historical project has amply demonstrated that even as colonial officials and Indologists denied India a history, and Indians a tradition of historical writing, they set

about establishing a new historical method that designated most pre-colonial texts as ‘sources’ from which a legitimate history of India could be constructed.[5] The colonial philological project—an outgrowth of the field of Indology—was closely linked to the historical project as comparative philology conceived of itself as a historical discipline, because it was only through a study of a society’s past that its present could be understood. The early past, moreover, could be excavated through an examination of a society’s texts in its classical language, which in the case of India, was Sanskrit.[6] The nineteenth-century German philologist Albrecht Weber noted that ‘the deficiency of all historical testimony for that early time is … made good for each people by the form of its language’.[7] Thus, as Revathi Krishnaswamy points out, for nineteenth-century comparative philology, language itself was ‘a privileged site of history … a kind of archive’.[8] The texts unearthed through the philological project were to serve as sources for the construction of the narrative of India’s political and linguistic past.

In the case of most regions of colonial India, this had resulted in the launch of a series of searches for Sanskrit manuscripts through the nineteenth century, and the subsequent production of tour reports, catalogues, and critical editions of various ‘classical’ Indian texts. Other than the sporadic efforts of orientalists such as H. H. Wilson, Anthony Troyer, and Alexander Cunningham, Kashmir had remained largely unexplored by colonial Indologists and philologists alike, partly due to the political unrest in the region through the first half of the nineteenth century as it transitioned from Afghan to Sikh to Dogra rule. The importance of exploring Kashmir’s Sanskrit past, however, was well recognized since the late eighteenth century, when Francis Gladwin’s translation of the *Ain-i Akbari* drew the attention of the pre-eminent orientalist, William Jones, to the existence of *Rajatarangini* as a source for Indian history.[9] Although Jones himself was unable to carry out the task of acquiring and translating a manuscript of the text, individuals such as William Moorcroft and H. T. Colebrooke made efforts to procure manuscript copies of *Rajatarangini* in the early nineteenth century.[10] This allowed Wilson and Troyer to translate the work into English and

French respectively, followed later in the century by the Indian nationalist, J. C. Dutt's, translation into English.

Kashmir's great potential for contributing to knowledge about India's classical past through its Sanskrit manuscripts in general, and *Rajatarangini* in particular, was thus widely acknowledged in orientalist circles by the second half of the nineteenth century. The discursive production of knowledge about Kashmir as a repository of India's Aryan past was entrenched and disseminated through the institutional practices put in place by the Dogra dynasty, particularly the second Dogra ruler, Ranbir Singh (r. 1858–85). Ranbir Singh instituted a series of measures to establish the Hindu lineage of his dynasty, and by extension, of Kashmir itself. This led to the promotion of the idea of Kashmir as a region with an ancient tradition of Sanskrit learning through the establishment of specific institutions, such as the Raghunath temple *pathshala* (school) and library. The Maharaja deputed several Kashmiri Pandits to acquire Sanskrit manuscripts for the library from both within and outside Kashmir, in particular Benares, and by the 1880s, the library had become the largest repository of Kashmir's Sanskrit texts anywhere in India. In addition, he patronized the production of new commentaries and digests in various branches of Sanskrit literature, and the translation of several Sanskrit texts into Hindi (including *Rajatarangini*), as well as the translation of Persian and Arabic texts into Sanskrit.[11]

It is no surprise, then, that the first systematic colonial search for Sanskrit manuscripts in Kashmir was led by the famous Sanskritist Georg Buhler during Ranbir Singh's rule, in 1875. Since by this time orientalist endeavours had turned to exploring the folklore, peasant cultures, and languages of the various regions of India, Buhler's activities in Kashmir paved the way for a slew of Indologists and missionaries, most notably M. A. Stein and George Grierson, to conduct research simultaneously on Kashmir's Sanskrit literature, folklore, and languages. Stein, who is discussed at length in this chapter, produced a critical edition and translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, while Grierson edited several Kashmiri texts, as well as a dictionary of the Kashmiri language. They were assisted in these endeavours by a group of Kashmiri Pandits well-versed in

Sanskrit, Persian, and Kashmiri, who not only provided them with access to the texts, but also interpreted them in the wider linguistic, topographical, and historical context of Kashmir. The resultant project—which identified a corpus of Kashmir's Sanskrit texts as legitimate sources for the study of India's past—was animated by a complex interplay between, and at times seamless blending of, the disciplinary perspectives of history, archeology, and philology on the one hand, and Kashmir's textual and popular traditions and sources on the other.

These activities, which provide a rich mine for an exploration of colonial knowledge production and the role played by indigenous knowledge and local intermediaries in the process, however, have remained largely unexplored by historians working on the subject. The recent work of literary scholar Ananya Jahanara Kabir discusses the orientalist project in Kashmir, particularly Stein's engagement with *Rajatarangini*, as an example of the imposition of the mechanisms and practices of colonial modernity on Kashmir's landscape. This, she argues, laid the foundation for Kashmir's ultimate representation as a 'territory of desire' in the postcolonial period.[12] However, not only does the work remain limited to a discussion of how the engagement rendered Kashmir into a Hindu space, it also does not engage with the influence of Kashmir's multilingual narrative tradition on the project through, in part, the active participation of indigenous interlocutors.

Indeed, much of the scholarship on the translation of Sanskrit classics into English in nineteenth- and twentieth-century India has focused on Hindu sacred texts such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana[13] or Manu's Dharmashastra,[14] to illustrate that the orientalist, and later, the nationalist definitions of India's past, were specifically Hindu. Sanskrit literature, according to Victor A. van Bijlert, 'came to be utilized [by Hindu upper and middle class intellectuals] as one of the major legitimizing sources of Indian national identity constructed as Hindu identity'.[15] Focusing on the discourse of colonial modernity in her work on the European translations of indigenous texts, Tejaswini Niranjana argues that these translations fixed colonized cultures and brought 'into being hegemonic versions of the non-Western other', as they inserted

Indian texts into Eurocentric cultural narratives.[16] In the somewhat different colonial context of French Algeria, but in the same vein, Abdelmajid Hannoum argues that the translation of a fragment of Ibn Khaldun's fourteenth-century text into French as *Histoire des Berberes* transformed it into a 'colonial text with colonial categories', and hence an entirely new text, by converting local knowledge into colonial knowledge.[17]

While there is no doubt that the English translations of *Rajatarangini* were consumed with slotting it into European categories of knowledge, particularly 'history', and certainly also produced entirely new texts, the act of translation was far more complex, and it involved a dialogue between European and indigenous knowledge. The process, thus, led to the rethinking of the very ideas of history and the nation. Further, since *Rajatarangini* was a Sanskrit text without any specifically Hindu moorings, it could be claimed by at least some of its Indian translators as representing a secular as opposed to a Hindu past for the Indian nation. Moreover, the translation project that recreated *Rajatarangini* as a series of entirely new narratives directed towards a national audience, both drew the contours of Kashmir as a regional historical space, while at the same time absorbing it into the narrative of the history of the Indian nation. It was thus partly responsible for the text's transformation from a regional to a national narrative. However, as the next chapter illustrates, the contents of the text continued to animate the Kashmiri popular imagination throughout the twentieth century and well into the present.

Early-Nineteenth-Century European Engagements with *Rajatarangini*

'The only Sanscrit composition yet discovered, to which the title of History, can with any propriety be applied, is the *Raja Taringini*, a history of Cashmir',[18] wrote H. H. Wilson in his partial translation of *Rajatarangini* published in the *Asiatic Researches* in 1825. This translation set the stage for Indological engagement with Kashmir's Sanskrit literature and its past for the rest of the century. Wilson

established the idea that unlike other regions of India, Kashmir was not a historical *tabula rasa*, since it possessed a connected narrative of its past: 'The whole forming a remarkable proof of the attention bestowed by Cashmirian writers upon the history of their country, an attention the more extraordinary, from the contrast it affords, to the total want of historical enquiry in any other part of the extensive countries peopled by the Hindus'.[19] This drew attention to Kashmir's historical tradition as encapsulated in *Rajatarangini* and its continuations, ensuring that future orientalist research in Kashmir would be geared towards translating the text, rather than writing the history of the region (as was the case with colonial historical efforts in other regions of India). Further, as the article's title, 'An Essay on the Hindu History of Kashmir', indicates, it created a link between the history of Kashmir and the narrative of Indian history, particularly in its ancient, 'Hindu' period.

Wilson's essay, which was not technically a translation, but rather a sketch of the early history of Kashmir, was based on three manuscripts of *Rajatarangini* that he had acquired from pandits in Calcutta and Lucknow. It also utilized and relied heavily on several Persian histories of Kashmir, which Wilson labelled as translations and continuations of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and later Sanskrit narratives. The most notable of the Persian texts were the two eighteenth-century histories by Khwaja Azam Dyadmari and Narayan Koul—*Waqiat-i Kashmir* and *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* respectively.[20] Unlike later nineteenth-century nationalist translations of *Rajatarangini*, which eschewed the use of Kashmir's Persian texts, Wilson considered the Persian narratives as essential for reconstructing the history of Kashmir, and for filling in the lacunae of the Sanskrit chronicles. He did, however, berate the Persian narratives for translating the legendary aspects of the original while ignoring its historical aspects, an idea repeated almost verbatim by later translators of *Rajatarangini*.[21]

The main aim of Wilson's translation was not so much to illuminate the history of Kashmir, which he considered of no great 'magnitude or importance', as much as to use the series of texts as sources to shed light on the 'Hindu' history of India, since India's history and chronology prior to Muslim invasions was engulfed in

darkness.[22] As a result, he presented Kashmir as a kingdom that had been Hindu from ancient times, the supplier of princes to the plains of India, such as the Pandava princes (of the Mahabharata) who had originally hailed from Kashmir, and had generally 'played an important role in the concerns of India'.[23] As one of the lengthy appendices to the essay titled 'On the Date of Yudhishthir' indicates, one of the ways in which Wilson proved Kashmir's Hindu identity, and therefore its importance to the history of India, was by linking the historical events related in *Rajatarangini* to Hindu classical texts such as the Mahabharata.[24]

Furthermore, he not only attempted to apply the chronology supplied by *Rajatarangini* 'to the establishment of dates, for incidents or persons of interest in the records of Hindustan',[25] but he also confirmed emergent ideas about the narrative of Indian history, beginning with its periodization into the Hindu, Muslim, and British periods. In addition, according to Wilson, Kashmir's history could provide corroboration for themes within early Indian history, such as the schism between Brahmans and Buddhists. He went so far as to note that *Rajatarangini* revealed that when there was an attempt from 'Tartary' to introduce Buddhism amongst Kashmiris, it was 'combated and finally frustrated by southern assistance: the national faith of Cashmir has ever since continued Hindu'.[26] For Wilson, thus, *Rajatarangini* in itself was less important than was its translation alongside that of other histories of Kashmir, which was crucial for constructing the narrative and chronology of India's ancient past.

That Wilson's translation, alongside Anthony Troyer's French translation of *Rajatarangini* in three volumes (1840–52),[27] spurred an interest in the history of Kashmir as a subject of study, in particular in its ability to highlight the themes of India's history as a whole, is undeniable. An 1850 *Calcutta Review* article, for instance, drew attention to the two works to present Kashmir as the font of Indian civilization, and as 'the intellectual cradle of the Hindus', and to illustrate that knowledge 'spread in India from North to South'.[28] The article utilized the text of the translations to confirm or reject ideas about ancient Indian history such as the caste system, the

position of women, religious conflicts between Brahmans and Buddhists, and so on.[29] It argued that Kashmir's history could provide valuable insights into the 'character and habits' of the people of India to allow the colonial state to adopt measures suitable to them.[30] Furthermore, the anonymous author of the article made a case for the inclusion of *Rajatarangini* into the curriculum of Sanskrit College, Calcutta, 'to guide … minds into the channel of historical research, in which Pandits take very little interest'.[31] He also urged the Asiatic Society of Bengal to collect Sanskrit manuscripts in Bengal and other parts of India with the same zeal as had been displayed by Colonel Tod in western India, and Colonel Mackenzie in southern India.[32]

As is apparent from the foregoing discussion, the early engagements with *Rajatarangini* and Kashmir's historical tradition took place in the context of British India, not of Kashmir, and utilized manuscripts of *Rajatarangini* available outside the region as sources for the reconstruction of the early history of India. In this period, however, translators such as Wilson recognized the importance of placing *Rajatarangini* within a longer tradition of Sanskrit and Persian historiography in Kashmir. These translations and responses to them focused on the uniqueness of *Rajatarangini* as a Sanskrit historical text in an Indian literary landscape otherwise barren of history, and in drawing links between the history of Kashmir and that of India. It is thus not surprising that they generated nationalist translations of *Rajatarangini* later in the century that claimed it as a substitute for the history of the Indian nation.

Late-Nineteenth-Century Nationalist Translations of *Rajatarangini*

The translations of *Rajatarangini* discussed here functioned in the specifically nationalist context of historical production about India's past that took multiple forms and generated vibrant debates.[33] They drew on orientalist and nationalist ideas to present *Rajatarangini* in a new light that was in no way anchored to Kashmir's historical

tradition. The main aim of the translations was to appropriate *Rajatarangini* as a national text by claiming Kashmir's past as a reflection of the grand narrative of Indian history. Moreover, since this narrative was a decidedly Hindu one, in the following translations at least, *Rajatarangini* was presented as a Hindu text, and Kashmir as the font of Hindu culture and civilization. Nevertheless, the translations and the responses that they engendered illustrate the lively conversations about ideas of history and literature, and the relationship between them, taking place during this period in colonial India.

The Bengali intellectual J. C. Dutt published a comprehensive prose translation of *Rajatarangini* in two volumes in 1879 and 1887, followed in 1898 by a third volume that was a translation of the Sanskrit continuations of the text. The translation was based on an edition of the text published by the Asiatic Society, Bengal, in 1835. This was itself a printed version of a Devanagari copy of a Sarada manuscript of *Rajatarangini* acquired by William Moorcroft during his peregrinations through Ladakh and Kashmir in 1823. Dutt, brother of the noted Indian nationalist R. C. Dutt, to whom the first volume of the text is dedicated, had clearly undertaken the translation of the text to reclaim India's past, not only from official colonial histories, but also from the myths and legends that it appeared to be steeped in. As Sudipta Kaviraj has put it so well, for nineteenth-century middle-class Bengali intellectuals, history was 'the great terrain of politics. Because history is a way of talking about the collective self, and bringing it into existence'.[34] Dutt's *Kings of Kashmira*, then, was not simply a translation of the *Rajatarangini* narratives; it was, rather, a nationalist text that willed the Indian nation, through its past, into existence.

This is evident from the fact that Dutt (not unlike Wilson) incorporated the history of Kashmir as presented in *Rajatarangini* into the history of India, referring to Kalhana as 'the father of Indian history'.[35] He begins the preface to volume one by stating that India was separated from the rest of the world by the lofty Himalayas where lived a race of people known as the Aryans who developed a high degree of civilization, but had left behind no 'authentic records'. He goes on to lament the paucity of historical records about India's

ancient past, particularly in texts such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which according to him, contained 'stories of the past mostly of an absurd and romantic kind'.[36] From the harsh judgements he passed on Indian narratives, evident in his declaration that 'such being the character of the books we now possess, an attempt to write a history, in its usual sense, of India, must at present remain a hopeless task',[37] it is clear that he had imbibed the opinions of the colonial and orientalist proponents of the new historical method on Indian texts. Since composing a history of ancient India was an impossible task, according to Dutt, the best that could be accomplished was a 'faithful rendering' into English of an already existent Sanskrit historical account of a people who lived in one corner of India.[38] Dutt was thus willing to overlook the defects in Kalhana's text (of which he cited many) since, 'he is perhaps the only author in Sanskrita, now known, who attempted to write a sober history'.[39]

The past that Dutt claimed for the Indian nation was, of course, a purely Hindu one uncorrupted by later Muslim interpolations, but its written history, as encapsulated in *Rajatarangini*, had to be entirely, almost militantly, devoid of religious feeling.[40] As a result, he cited the extensive use of Persian histories (which focused on the miraculous) in Wilson's translation of *Rajatarangini* as one of the reasons for undertaking the task of producing a better translation, which would be a more 'faithful rendering' of the text.[41] Alongside rejecting Wilson's essay as a mere sketch that was 'mixed up with the whimsical additions and alterations which appear in the Persian translations',[42] Dutt's translation heavily edited the *Rajatarangini* to expunge it of all incidents that could be considered mythical, legendary, or religious. All such incidents were relegated to appendices at the end of the translation. Poetic flourishes, similarly, stood in the way of composing a factual history of the Indian past through *Rajatarangini*. Dutt preferred the later Sanskrit chroniclers who continued the text into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to Kalhana, because they were less given to 'poesy'. However, their willingness to 'raise Mahomedan princes not only above the ancient heroes of their country, whom as Hindus they must have revered,

but even above the gods of the Hindus',[43] raised questions about their impartiality as historians.

Since for Dutt, his translation of *Rajatarangini* was a means to prove that India did have a tradition of unprejudiced historical writing that presented a more or less chronological narrative of events in one part of India, the actual text of the translation reads like a history textbook. For instance, he condensed the early verses of the text that number about twenty-four, which were used by later scholars to discuss Kalhana's historical intent, as well as his narrative style, into two pages of prose. So by the third page of the translation, the reader is already greeted by the chronological listing of the kings of Kashmir and their deeds. Dutt's translation, thus, was as much an attempt to retrieve an Indian past written by its own historians, as it was a treatise on the actual science of historical composition, based entirely, of course, on the post-Enlightenment rationalist view of history.

This, however, was not the only view of history through which nationalists engaged with *Rajatarangini*. In a review of H. H. Wilson's and his brother's translations published in the *Calcutta Review*, aptly titled, 'History of Kashmira:-A Contribution Towards Ancient Indian History', R. C. Dutt not only incorporated *Rajatarangini* more comprehensively into the narrative of India's past, but he did so by questioning the utility of the colonial historical method. In his opinion, pursuing this method led to a mere record of dynastic lists rather than 'the real history of the great people'.[44] Dutt insisted that real history lay not in compiling accurate chronologies and lists of royal names, but rather in patiently sifting through materials and records of different ages, 'to gather … the laws, manners, and customs of the people of India through successive stages of civilisation … [in order to] trace with pleasure the progress of a nation isolated from the rest of the world, and working out its civilisation gradually and uninterruptedly, through a period of three thousand years'.[45] The value of Kalhana's text towards this endeavour, according to Dutt, could 'scarcely be overestimated', since it was not merely a chronological record, but also embodied the more expansive, connected narrative of the history of the Hindu

nation by richly incorporating the customs, folk tales, and literature of the people.[46]

Accordingly, unlike his brother J. C. Dutt, who was appalled by the persistence of 'mythical' tales throughout *Rajatarangini*, R. C. Dutt resurrected these stories from the appendices of the translation, admitting that although they appeared 'childish on the face of them', they were 'invaluable when taken according to their proper significance'.[47] He then analysed the stories to highlight consistent themes in the historical narrative of ancient India, such as the tension between Brahmans and Buddhists. Dutt read the following story, for instance, as evidence of the persistence of Buddhism in the face of Brahmanical dominance: When King Jaloka of Kashmir, a Shaivite and Ashoka's successor, was on his way to a temple, he was accosted by a woman demanding food; when he promised her whatever food she wanted, she transformed into a deformed shape and asked for human flesh. Hearing this, the king offered her his own flesh; moved by his heroism and regard for the life of others, she remarked that he was a second Buddha. The king asked her who the Buddha was and she informed him that the followers of the Buddha were peaceable people who did good deeds, but had been wronged by him, when he had destroyed their monastery on the incitement of 'wicked men'. The only way he could atone for his sins, according to the woman, was to build a monastery with his gold, which he erected on the place of his meeting with the woman.[48] Yet another story from the text in which Brahmans appear to curse the king of Kashmir and cause his sudden death, was used by Dutt to proclaim the 'insolence and pride of the Brahmans', also stating that they 'fabricated stories and interwove them with history in order to preserve their supremacy and glorify their power'.[49]

Not only did R. C. Dutt engage deeply with the incidents narrated in the text that may never have taken place, perhaps equally significantly, he did not dismiss the epics as his brother so summarily did. In fact, he located the commencement of Kashmir's 'authentic' history with the Kuru-Pandav war, the date for which he established using 'astronomical, philological and chronological

premises', as well as textual sources such as *Rajatarangini*. This was also the date, according to Dutt, when the Vedic period came to an end, the Vedas were compiled, and 'a new epoch in the history of India was opened'. And the events within this epoch could be traced using the contents of *Rajatarangini*, including its supernatural tales, factual information, and chronology.[50] For Dutt, *Rajatarangini* reflected 'the real history of the great people', since 'every great social or religious revolution, and every great historical event which transpired in India, have left their impress on the history of this secluded province'.[51] This was encapsulated equally, according to him, in the chronological sequence of Kashmir's kings and the stories by and about its people.

Much like R. C. Dutt in Bengal, intellectuals such as Harischandra of Benaras also drew on Puranic sources, Sanskrit literature, folklore, and colonial histories as a means of writing nationalist histories in the vernacular in multiple genres, including the historical essay.[52] One such essay written by Harischandra in 1884, entitled *Kasmirkusum*, a history of the kings of Kashmir, relied heavily on *Rajatarangini*. Moreover, it drew on Abul Fazl's the *Ain-i Akbari*, Wilson's, Troyer's, and J. C. Dutt's English and French translations of the text, Dewan Kirpa Ram's Persian history of Kashmir (most likely *Gulzar-i Kashmir*), and James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. Harischandra begins the essay with the familiar refrain bemoaning the absence of historical writing in India, lauding *Rajatarangini* for appearing like a star on this dark firmament by presenting an unbroken narrative of events.[53] This is followed by a genealogy of the Dogra rulers of Kashmir, linking them to the early rulers of Kashmir mentioned in *Rajatarangini*, thus establishing the Hindu dynasty's legitimacy to rule over the region.[54]

Interestingly, Harischandra was quite willing to accept the chronology of the early cantos of *Rajatarangini*, condemned by both orientalists and nationalists as faulty and legendary. This was because the essay was less concerned with using *Rajatarangini* as a source to establish the history of India than either Wilson or Dutt, and more interested in highlighting the Hindu character of both *Rajatarangini* and the land—Kashmir—from which it hailed. The

essay established a direct link between Kashmir's ancient Hindu past and its Hindu present (as exemplified by Dogra rule), merely glancing over several hundred years of Muslim rule in the process. For instance, it noted that, 'through his austerities, Kashyap muni is said to have dried the waters that flooded this region'. This was followed, according to the essay, by 3,700 years of Hindu rule and 500 years of Muslim rule. The latter had finally come to an end, and for the past sixty-four years, Hindu rule had been re-established in Kashmir.[55]

This is not surprising given that Harischandra wrote several regional histories that were presented as exclusively Hindu. As Vasudha Dalmia notes, 'Since "Hinduness" was increasingly coeval with the territory inhabited by Hindus, the history of respective regions was seen in terms of when Hindu kings reigned and when they had to retreat'.[56] From the paeans he records of the contemporary Dogra ruler of Kashmir, it is clear that for Harischandra, Kashmir, the land from which hailed the only surviving history of India, was and should be rightfully Hindu.

Nevertheless, Harischandra was much more willing than earlier nationalist translators such as Dutt to use a variety of texts, including writings by Europeans and Muslims, to establish this undeniably Hindu nature of Kashmir's past and present. The essay itself (including a lengthy table of the history of Kashmir appended to it, which begins with king Gonanda and ends with the Dogra ruler Ranbir Singh) is explicitly drawn equally from *Rajatarangini*, the writings of European philologists, antiquarians, and historians, from Indian nationalist writings, as well as from Indo-Persian and Kashmir's Persian histories.[57] It is noteworthy, however, that the text often points out what it deems as historical errors in Kashmir's Persian texts, particularly in their record of the length of individual rulers' reigns.

Late-nineteenth-century nationalist engagements with *Rajatarangini* were based heavily on orientalist ideas about Kashmir and its utility for establishing the narrative of Indian history, even as they questioned the new historical method that was firmly entrenched in colonial circles by the mid-nineteenth century. These

challenges to the historical method were a product of the debates on history taking place in the regions of British India as Indians took to the task of writing the history of the nation. Kashmir itself usually figured as little more than a remote corner of India in these translations of *Rajatarangini* and in other historical writings drawn from the text. Its narrative tradition, similarly, was reduced to *Rajatarangini* and its continuations, with the Persian texts discussed, if at all, as inaccurate translations. Thus, other than claiming it and its past as Hindu, nationalist engagements with *Rajatarangini* left the contours of the region rather undefined. The region, as well as Kashmiri intermediaries, became far more central to the orientalist project in late-nineteenth-century Kashmir.

Collecting and Collating Kashmir's Sanskrit Manuscripts

'The new materials which I have procured will enable us to restore the text to a much greater degree of purity than could ever be done with the help of Devanagari MSS.', wrote Georg Buhler, the noted Sanskritist, professor of oriental languages at Elphinstone College, Bombay, and officer-in-charge of search for Sanskrit manuscripts, Bombay Presidency, of his attempts to collate *Rajatarangini* while on tour to collect Sanskrit manuscripts in Kashmir in 1875. Buhler was the first to point out that the earlier translations of *Rajatarangini* were unreliable because they were based on corrupt manuscript copies of the original text, and hence 'its explanation leaves a great deal to desire'.[58] He was thus responsible for launching what culminated in, two decades later through the activities of his student and Indologist M. A. Stein, an effort to reconstitute the 'genuine' text of *Rajatarangini* (and to translate it), so as to be able to 'use its contents for the history of India'.[59]

Buhler's search for Sanskrit manuscripts in Kashmir brought him into contact with Kashmiri Pandit scholars who were not only scribes, calligraphers, and translators, but also active participants in a vibrant market for Kashmir's Sanskrit (and Persian) manuscripts within and outside Kashmir.[60] According to Prof. T. N. Ganjju, a

Sanskrit scholar and scribe who continues to practise the ancestral profession in Srinagar, Kashmiri Pandits spent winters copying manuscripts, and in the spring, departed for India to sell them.[61] In addition, these Pandit families maintained large private collections of primarily Sanskrit religious and philosophical manuscripts.

The fortunes of many learned Pandit families in particular had declined in the first half of the nineteenth century; the latter half of the century brought relatively more opportunities in the form of Maharaja Ranbir Singh's patronage of Sanskrit and Persian scholarship, as well as through the activities of orientalists such as Buhler. The Maharaja played a critical role in introducing Buhler (and later Stein) to prominent Kashmiri Pandit scholars. Buhler's interest in acquiring Sanskrit manuscripts in particular attracted the Pandits, given the financial incentives involved, although not all were willing to part with their manuscripts in exchange for financial remuneration. However, the role played by Pandits in Buhler's tour far exceeded the mere sale of manuscripts; it is clear from his report that they shaped all aspects of the tour, from acting as guides during the actual travel itself, to the collection, translation, and interpretation of the manuscripts.[62]

During his tour, Buhler not only acquired a whole range of manuscripts, thus creating a colonial collection of Sanskrit sources from Kashmir, but more significantly, the detailed report of the tour established strict criteria on the basis of which the authenticity of Kashmir's Sanskrit manuscripts, including those of *Rajatarangini*, would be gauged in the future. A philologist by training, who had long championed the publication of critical editions of Sanskrit classics, particularly for use in Indian schools and colleges,[63] Buhler set about sifting through the manuscripts he acquired in Kashmir. He divided them into four classes, in order of importance: most important, since they were the oldest, and hence closest to their originals, were the Bhurja manuscripts written on thin sheets of birch bark, in Kashmir's ancient Sarada script. Next were the Sarada paper manuscripts, which shared most of the characteristics of the Sarada birch-bark manuscripts, except that none were older than two hundred years. Devanagari manuscripts on paper, copied in Kashmir, formed the third category of manuscripts, and it was on

these that Buhler passed the harshest judgement, branding them as spurious copies of original texts.[64]

According to Buhler, not only were 'the Devanagari MSS. written in Kasmir … very modern', but they were also 'mostly prepared for the market', by professional Kashmiri scribes who 'not unfrequently "cooked", i.e. the lacunae and defects in the original are filled in according to the fancy of the Pandit who corrects them', thus rendering them unfit for the use of philologists and Indologists seeking to reconstruct ancient Sanskrit texts. Citing as an example the case of a copy of the *Nilamata Purana* prepared under the orders of the Maharaja by Pandit Sahebram, Buhler stated that even though only portions of this ancient Sanskrit text were extant, and many of them were defective, Sahebram restored the entire text 'according to his best ability', which then the Pandits came to regard as superior to all the other copies of the text. 'If I had not come to Kasmir soon after his death,' noted Buhler of what he considered a philological travesty, 'it is not improbable that the genuine text would have disappeared altogether.'[65] This time-honoured practice, in which scribes added to or changed the texts they were copying, was considered so egregious by Buhler because it was seen as deviating from the original form of the text, as intended by its author. Needless to say, Buhler felt the same way about Devanagari manuscripts from outside Kashmir, which form the fourth category of manuscripts listed in his report.

Buhler applied these standards to restore the text of *Rajatarangini*, which he considered as 'the only Kasmirian work interesting a larger circle of readers', stating that the translations of *Rajatarangini* carried out by European scholars such as Wilson and Troyer were unreliable precisely because they were based on untrustworthy Devanagari copies—one of which was made by the pandits of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta—of a Sarada text that was the oldest extant copy of the original. For Buhler, reading a manuscript of *Rajatarangini* in Sarada characters, 'in which Kalhana's original copy and all MSS. in Kasmir were written',[66] was of utmost importance in helping to reconstitute the original version of the text. Buhler was, however, unsuccessful in this endeavour since he was unable to get more than a brief look at the Sarada copy of

the ‘codex archetypus’ of *Rajatarangini*, which was in possession of Pandit Kesavram from Srinagar, who refused to sell his copy despite repeated entreaties.[67] Significantly, Buhler mentioned the fifteenth-century Sanskrit continuations of *Rajatarangini* only in so far as to state that the available manuscripts of these texts were Devanagari copies and hence unreliable.[68]

Despite his failure to gain access to the codex of *Rajatarangini* he so earnestly sought, Buhler nevertheless translated a few verses of his collated text (with help from Pandit Sahebram), while expounding at length on the techniques that ought to be used in correctly explaining and translating the narrative. He strongly suggested the need for a careful study of the style of Kashmiri writers who preceded and followed Kalhana in order to be able to understand his use of similes and other turns of phrase. He also introduced the idea that *Rajatarangini* could not be fully understood without a careful study of the ancient geography of Kashmir, an idea especially taken to heart by Stein later in the century. Finally, and most significantly, Buhler argued that the contents of the text could be used to construct the history of India only if its earlier mythical sections were differentiated from its later more historical sections, since ‘an author who connects the history of his country with the imaginary date of a legendary event, like the coronation of Yudhisthira … must always be sharply controlled, and deserves no credit whatever in those portions of his work where his narrative shows any suspicious figures or facts’.[69]

Buhler’s activities in Kashmir and the directives issued in his *Report* are notable for a number of reasons. First, they altered the direction of European engagement with Kashmir’s literary culture and heralded Kashmir’s entry into the centre-stage of orientalist projects. The idea that Kashmir’s textual knowledge lay within its confines and had to be acquired through meticulous research that involved sifting through and locating its authentic Sanskrit manuscripts now became well entrenched. Moreover, Buhler gave scholarly sanction to the increasing association between Sanskrit manuscripts in the Sarada script and Kashmir’s genuine, Hindu past, while dismissing manuscripts in the Devanagari script as too ‘modern’ to be of much use.

The concern with origins took on new meaning in this context: while for the indigenous narrative tradition, locating the origins of the land and the genealogy of its narrative tradition as a whole was of paramount importance, the orientalist project was defined by an obsession with locating the origins of individual Sanskrit narratives, as also the original texts themselves, to render them as part of a national literary canon. Sole authorship, thus, once established, could not be impinged upon by later interpolations on the body of the original text. The primacy given by Buhler (as also the Dogra State) to collecting Kashmir's Sanskrit manuscripts (close to eight hundred) during his tour, which were then deposited at the library of the Deccan College, Pune, cemented the status of Kashmir as a font of Sanskrit civilization in the Indian subcontinent and formed the basis of the colonial-orientalist archive on Kashmir.[70]

In contrast to hundreds of Sanskrit manuscripts, Buhler's tour catalogue lists merely eight Persian and twenty-four Kashmiri manuscripts. Although collecting manuscripts in languages other than Sanskrit was clearly not the objective of the tour, its focus on Sanskrit manuscripts, partly at least, underlines the official marginalization of the Persian and Kashmiri literary traditions. While these traditions enjoyed a vibrant existence on Kashmir's literary landscape, as we have seen so far, and as we shall see in the next chapter, the eventual end of official patronage and the switch to Urdu as the court language in the late nineteenth century ultimately led to the decline, in particular, of the Persian textual historical tradition. The dual impact of the nationalization of Kashmir's Sanskrit tradition and the decline of Persian ensured the diminishing influence of *Rajatarangini* within Kashmir's indigenous literary (particularly textual) landscape in the first half of the twentieth century.

Finally, Buhler established the idea that Kashmiri Pandits, not *pir*s and other Persian literati associated with Kashmir's shrines, were the main purveyors of knowledge about Kashmir's literary and linguistic past. At the same time, this past, through its manuscripts, could no longer remain the sole domain of the Pandits and had to be shared with the larger Indological community. Although Buhler, much like its earlier translators, was interested in *Rajatarangini* for what it

could reveal about the history of India, he appreciated the regional nature of the narrative, pointing out that it could not be fully understood without placing it within Kashmir's topographical and linguistic contexts. And this information, according to him, could only be interpreted and imparted by Kashmiri Pandits. Thus, the orientalist projects launched in the wake of Buhler's tour, in particular the production of Stein's critical edition and translation of *Rajatarangini*, were much more anchored to Kashmir's literary, oral, and historiographical traditions than earlier engagements with the text.

Rajatarangini as Regional Historical Narrative

M. A. Stein (1862–1943) holds a revered place in the annals of early-twentieth-century archaeology, especially for his surveys in Central Asia and Iran. An earlier and lesser-known period of his career, which was critical in establishing his credentials in the field of Indology and archeology, was his work on editing and translating Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. The products of these endeavours—a critical edition published in 1892 and a two-volume translation published in 1900—are perhaps the most widely-read and cited edition and translation of the text. They have shaped, and continue to inform, prevalent ideas about *Rajatarangini* as a legitimate history due to its adherence to a chronological narrative, its author's discussion of his sources, and his objectivity. However, Stein refrained from describing it as a history in his voluminous introduction to the translation, characterizing it instead as a 'medieval chronicle'.

Stein was thus responsible for giving physical form to *Rajatarangini* as a single text produced at a particular historical moment, and legitimizing it as a historical *kavya* in Sanskrit that could take its rightful place as part of India's Sanskrit canon, and of course, also as a historical source par excellence.[71] However, as the following discussion illustrates, Stein's engagement with the text was multifaceted and deeply rooted in the regional historiographical and literary contexts of Kashmir, and provides a fresh arena for examining the refashioning of Kashmir's narrative tradition.

Ironically, this endowed the text with a dual character: while cementing its position as a regional text, it also allowed it to be appropriated as a national narrative.

Born in Hungary to a Jewish family, Stein was educated in Germany, Britain, and Austria, where he developed an interest in Sanskrit and Indology under the guidance of orientalists such as Buhler. Unable to find a position in the European academy, Stein ultimately took the offer of a dual position as Registrar of Punjab University and Principal of Oriental College, Lahore, and set off for India in 1887.[72] He arrived in Lahore in the midst of a crisis of oriental studies, with the Oriental College in disarray after the resignation and departure of its former principal, G. W. Leitner—another Hungarian-born naturalized British citizen who had been critical to the foundation of oriental studies in the Punjab—and the Punjab government increasingly moving towards English-language education. Stein not only accepted the new limits placed on Oriental College by the Punjab government, but also agreed in principle with its emphasis on English as the appropriate medium of instruction (at the expense of the vernacular). He unequivocally maintained, for instance, that the best means of pursuing a study of India's Sanskrit texts by Indian students was through the medium of English. According to Stein, it was in English that 'all the best translations and editions of good Sanskrit treatises were published'.[73] At the same time, Stein was keen to make his mark on the field of Sanskrit studies by himself producing at least one of these critical editions and translations. Working in Kashmir, an almost uncharted territory for Indologists, and on *Rajatarangini*, about which he had heard from Buhler in addition to reading his report, provided the perfect opportunity to do just that.[74]

A cursory reading of Stein's prefaces and introductions to the critical edition and translation suggests that his engagement with *Rajatarangini* was based almost entirely on prevailing historical and philological ideas. Indeed, Stein expressed his agreement with these ideas at every turn, beginning with his introduction to the catalogue of the Raghunath Temple Library. He undertook this project to gain access to Kashmir's Sanskrit manuscripts and learned Kashmiri Pandits, while establishing his credentials in the

fields of philology and Indology.[75] Stein noted in the catalogue's preface that although the manuscript collection in the Raghunath Library did not reflect the concerns of modern philology, since the Jammu collectors 'could scarcely be expected to appreciate the historical value of works which had long ago ceased to be studied by the indigenous scholar', the collection could nevertheless illuminate 'a considerable number of works which have hitherto been unknown or at least only partially accessible to the Sanskrit scholar'.[76]

The work on the catalogue was carried out simultaneously with the preparation of *Rajatarangini*'s critical edition, which, following Buhler's directives, was characterized by a search for the original *Rajatarangini* manuscript and the location of its origins. Accordingly, Stein dismissed all Devanagari copies of the text as corrupt.[77] According to Stein, the earlier edition of *Rajatarangini* published in 1835 under the auspices of the Asiatic Society was unreliable since it was based on a faulty Devanagari transcript of a Kashmiri manuscript acquired by William Moorcroft. In addition, the Calcutta pandits responsible for its preparation had 'alter[ed] the text in an unscrupulous manner', due to their lack of familiarity with the Sarada script, and equally importantly, with Kashmir's traditions and topography.[78]

In his preface to the critical edition, Stein declared that he had based the edition almost entirely on the codex of *Rajatarangini* in Sarada script, which he had acquired from a Kashmiri Pandit family through the intervention of the Kashmir State Council in 1889. Since the manuscript had been divided among the three heirs of the original owner after his death, Stein took credit for uniting once again in his hands, the 'disjecta membra of the codex archetypus of the *Rajatarangini*'.[79] This codex, dating from the late seventeenth century by a copyist and scholar named Rajanaka Ratnakantha, contained all eight cantos of the poem. Not only was this the oldest extant copy of *Rajatarangini* in Sarada characters, but it was also, according to Stein, particularly reliable because its scribe had been identified and that too as 'not a mere copyist but a scholar of no small attainments who … has copied his original with great care and

accuracy'.[80] What was most important in establishing the significance of this codex was that it was a genuine copy of the text, since Ratnakantha had not attempted to restore the original where he found lacunae,[81] as contemporary pandits were wont to do. Furthermore, it was accompanied by numerous glosses, annotations, and critical readings in different hands, which added to its critical value. However, Stein recognized the importance of two of the annotators—whose glosses he concluded were based on genuine, older recensions of Kalhana's text[82]—while rejecting the other two as too modern to be of value in preparation of the critical edition.

Thus in the preface to the critical edition, Stein claimed that he was best suited to carry out the task precisely because he had reconstituted its genuine text based on strict philological standards. In addition, he pointed out that he was the only scholar capable of interpreting the text correctly because he had carried out several topographical and archeological expeditions of the Kashmir Valley that allowed him to provide material evidence towards the corroboration of the 'facts' within the text.[83] This was because he was distrustful of the narrative, since Kalhana displayed that peculiar characteristic of the Indian mind that 'never learned to divide mythology and legendary tradition from true history'.[84] Moreover, according to Stein, the Persian chronicles that used *Rajatarangini* as a source also focused on the 'stories bearing the stamp of the marvellous' and 'as Kalhana's account becomes more and more historical, the excerpts of these later writers flow briefer and more superficial'.[85] As such, Stein presented *Rajatarangini* as a text that could become a repository of historical facts through his intervention as translator as he distilled fact from fiction in the narrative.

While squarely located within the orientalist enterprise, Stein's engagement with *Rajatarangini* was nonetheless based on a far wider repertoire of sources and traditions.[86] His project of editing and translating *Rajatarangini* involved a deep study of Kashmir's long historical, literary, and folk traditions, as well as its topography, tasks which he took to with alacrity. In fact, while his perspective

may appear akin to J. C. Dutt's ideas, especially in terms of his critique of the legendary aspects of *Rajatarangini*, unlike Dutt, Stein retained and translated all the 'mythical' aspects of the text. He also criticized Dutt's translation precisely because it ignored 'Kashmirian sources of information', which for Stein, were critical for the interpretation and translation of the text.[87] Thus, according to him, *Rajatarangini* had to be read not merely as a historical narrative, but rather a repository of a regional culture and an embodiment of the peculiarities of Kashmir's literature and the historical sensibilities of its people.

Accordingly, he located Kalhana's writing style in its regional and historical contexts, recognizing that its historical value lay precisely in the Kashmiri popular traditions to which it gave voice so clearly: 'There is besides in Kalhana's maxims an unmistakably Kashmirian flavor which makes them particularly interesting from a historical point of view'.[88] For Stein, the legendary aspects of the text were, without a doubt, fanciful, yet in serving to 'reproduce faithfully the popular tradition', they were of 'considerable historical interest'.[89] Further, he lauded the aesthetic qualities of Kalhana's descriptions of events as 'characteristic and pregnant' and 'graphic and original', particularly in their satire and irony, not as a measure of its hyperrealism, and thus ahistoricity,[90] but rather as a critical measure of the text's historical authenticity.[91] According to Stein, Kalhana created a deep impression in the mind of the reader because the form of his stories 'wisely avoids all exaggeration and rhetoric effect'.[92]

Stein's interaction with Kashmir's historical texts and popular traditions to prepare the translation of *Rajatarangini* in the case of Kashmir has to be located in the realm of colonial knowledge production projects in a variety of regional contexts. James Tod encapsulated this project earlier in the nineteenth century in his composition of the much-celebrated *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. As Ramya Sreenivasan has pointed out, Tod, who had a distinctly Romantic perspective on race and nationality, was concerned not simply with disentangling the history of the Rajputs from their ballads and chronicles, but was also concerned with their

bardic narratives and traditions for what they revealed about the identity of the Rajputs.[93] From *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* emerged the idea of the Rajputs as a distinct nation, whose past would later be harnessed to the larger history of the Indian nation. According to Sreenivasan, thus, colonial knowledge should be seen as 'woven out of particular pre-colonial traditions and histories, not out of an over-determined mis-recognition assumed to follow inevitably from European intellectual moorings'.[94]

Two other colonial officials worth mentioning in this respect are Alexander Forbes in the case of Gujarat and Edward Gait in the case of Assam, both of whom carried out painstaking researches to record the histories of these respective regions. Sarvar V. Sherry Chand and Rita Kothari have pointed out that Forbes' extensive use of bardic and other poetic sources towards the composition of his history, entitled *Ras Mala* (A Garland of Chronicles, 1856)—which itself contained elements of popular narrative, history, and chronicle—indicates that he approached history-writing as a work of art and a performance. Furthermore, he viewed chronology as only one of its many components, since 'the living tradition does not exist in sequences of dates and events, but is a much larger entity'.[95] Similarly, the publication of Gait's *History of Assam* in 1906 was preceded by a massive effort at collecting a variety of sources, including coins and inscriptions, as well as historical documents such as *buranjis* and Assamese folklore and mythology, both of which he legitimized as useful and authentic historical sources for Assamese historiography.[96] These individuals produced specifically regional histories that drew on folk traditions, as well as indigenous forms of recording the past, creating regional colonial archives in the process.[97]

In a similar vein, Stein's translation of *Rajatarangini* became a means not so much to establish a chronology of Kashmir's past with a view to synchronizing it with Indian history, but rather to investigate Kashmir's geography, popular traditions, and history in a more connected fashion. This task involved collecting all 'the materials still left for the study of old Kasmir and its earliest records', which was of particular importance, in Stein's view, given the changes overtaking

Kashmir brought on by the 'rapid advance of Western influences'.[98] Stein's researches, thus, attempted to establish Kashmir as a unique and separate region within the Indian subcontinent that 'has escaped those great ethnic and political changes which have from time to time swept over the largest portion of India'.[99] While earlier European translators of various manuscripts of *Rajatarangini*, such as Wilson and Buhler, had dismissed the importance of Kashmir's history beyond its utility for the reconstruction of the narrative of India's past, for Stein, *Rajatarangini* was foremost a Kashmiri narrative that illustrated the 'peculiarity' of Kashmir's 'geographical position'. And it 'explains equally that remarkable individuality which characterizes the historical development of the country and constitutes its chief interest'.[100]

The echoes of Kashmir's narrative tradition are most evident in Stein's insistence on reading the text as a topographical document: 'It is impossible to understand correctly, or to utilize fully, the historical contents of the Kasmir Chronicle without paying close attention to the country's topography'.[101] It is no surprise that the cover of the first edition of the critical edition was adorned with a drawing of the ruins of the Martand temple, mentioned several times in Kashmiri 'annals', including *Rajatarangini*.[102] Stein thus set about literally mapping *Rajatarangini* onto Kashmir's landscape, which had the strikingly similar result, as in the Persian narratives discussed earlier, of drawing time and space together to create Kashmir as a historical space. *Rajatarangini* became the centrepiece of this aspect of the project of topographically mapping ancient Kashmir, which combined texts, oral traditions, and the landscape itself, alongside its geographical attributes and material remains, to present a picture of Kashmir as a distinct region.

The product of this endeavour was Stein's 'Memoir on Maps illustrating the Ancient Geography of Kasmir,' published by the Asiatic Society in 1899, later republished as an appendix to his 1900 translation of *Rajatarangini* as 'Memoir on the Ancient Geography of Kasmir'. This narrative was far more than simply an attempt to establish the historical factuality, and hence legitimacy, of Kalhana's narrative by mapping all the places mentioned in his text.[103] Much

like the indigenous narrative tradition, on which it clearly drew, it is infused with descriptions of Kashmir's landscape—geographical, historical, and literary. As Paul Carter has argued, 'the literature of spatial history', which includes explorer's journals, settlers' diaries, travelogues, and other such writings, cannot be 'read as self-evident sources for theatrical or nationalist plots', but rather in 'their active engagement with the road and the horizon'. This, he states, can allow us to understand 'spatiality as a form of non-linear writing; as a form of history'.[104] Reading Stein's 'Memoir' along similar lines, I would suggest, takes us beneath the façade of the text as imperial and positivist document based on European historical and archeological principles and merely composed for the advancement of the grand imperial historical narrative.

The 'Memoir' creatively interwove textual, oral, and material sources to link Kashmir's geographical features to its economic, political, and linguistic history, thereby placing the region's contemporary politics within its long historical trajectory. With detailed chapters on the sources of Kashmir's history and topography, its general geography (including the position and configuration of the Kashmir Valley and adjoining valleys and its ethnography), and Kashmir's political topography (including the frontiers of ancient Kashmir, the old and new capitals, and its main administrative divisions), the 'Memoir' established, among other things, a continuity between Kashmir's ancient past and its present through the Sanskrit language. In designating place names of towns, villages, pilgrimage places, and other locations in Kashmir, Stein declared that the Sanskrit forms of these names found in the Sanskrit chronicles (such as *Rajatarangini*) could 'be safely accepted as representing the genuine designations of the localities, i.e. as those originally given to them…. We have ample evidence to show that Sanskrit was the official and sole literary language of the country'.[105]

Stein's 'Memoir' should thus be read as a toponymic document, which as Bodhisattva Kar has pointed out in the case of toponymic practices in others parts of British India, identified 'the experienced spaces of the colony with the scripted territories of ancient traditions', through a meticulous process of establishing their original

place names.[106] While in Kar's view, for colonial officials this process was ultimately about including Indian regions within the imperial space of British India, Stein's toponymic analysis of Kashmir was designed to present the idea of the region as unique and distinct. Stein utilized sources from within and outside Kashmir to illustrate its existence as a region, named Kashmir, since antiquity. These included: classical notices, such as Ptolemy's geography; Chinese sources, such as the travel account by Hiuen Tsiang; Muslim accounts, such as Alberuni's history of India; and Kashmir's Sanskrit and Persian texts, among other sources.[107] Kashmir's well-defined geography, according to Stein, endowed it with a historical unity from the beginnings of recorded time:

> *Nature itself* when creating the great valley of Kasmir and its enclosing wall of mountains, seems to have assured to this territory not only a distinct geographical character, but also a historical existence of marked individuality. We see both these facts illustrated by the clearly defined and constant use of the name which the territory has borne from the earliest accessible period. This name, Kasmira, in its original Sanskrit form has been used as the sole designation of the country throughout its known history … uniformly applied both by the inhabitants and by foreigners.[108]

The geographical fixity and historical uniqueness of Kashmir, according to Stein, were reflected in its capital, Srinagar, which had existed at the same site for thirteen centuries due to its 'great natural advantages'.[109]

For Stein, not unlike the earlier and contemporary historians of Kashmir, ideas about place, territoriality, and temporality converged on the arena of landscape. Thus the landscape itself became a historical document within which the past was preserved and from which it could be retrieved—a sort of archive. Further, he discussed the variety of textual and oral traditions that he had utilized for his project, alongside his opinions on them, thereby creating an archive of acceptable sources critical for constructing and understanding the history and geography of Kashmir. These included the sources mentioned earlier, as well as the *Mahatmya*s—or texts detailing the legends connected with the sacred springs and other pilgrimage places of Kashmir and advice for pilgrims—and of course, the

popular oral traditions, which in particular Stein found more edifying than learned tradition.[110]

Nevertheless, he utilized these sources not so much to record the cartographic boundaries of ancient Kashmir or even to map out ancient Kashmir on a new landscape of ruins. Rather, he used them to chart the continuity between Kashmir's past and present by plotting and describing a living landscape of sacred sites, thus producing a geographical description similar to those in the Sanskrit texts and Persian *tarikh*s and tazkiras of Kashmir—'a kind of itinerant threnody for the relics of the great and the learned'.[111] This imbrication of methodologies, sources, and indeed time itself, is represented in the map of ancient Kashmir accompanying the 'Memoir', illustrating the sacred and profane sites of the past (most of which were still very much in use in the present) overlaid on the Trigonometrical Survey of India's ground map of Kashmir from 1856–60.

This aspect of tracing Kashmir's landscape of sacred sites illustrates the deep indebtedness of Stein's project to Kashmir's textual and popular traditions, even as it undermined the unity and continuity of Kashmir's narrative tradition by utilizing it as a mine for individual 'sources'. In focusing on the '*topographica sacra*' of Kashmir, Stein was clearly drawing on a long indigenous tradition of viewing Kashmir as an auspicious landscape, dotted with pilgrimage sites, evident in Kashmir's textual and oral traditions, and, as Stein points out, even in Persian texts such as the *Ain-i Akbari*. Drawing directly from the *Ain-i Akbari*'s description of Kashmir, Stein noted that 'Kasmir has from old times claimed an exceptionally large share in such manifestations of divine favour'.[112] Further, it is striking how thickly laden the 'Memoir' is with folk traditions regarding local sites, which Stein felt 'has often proved for our written records a most welcome supplement and commentary'.[113] As a result, he used them liberally to pinpoint the historical location and continued significance of not just sacred spaces, but also profane sites in ancient Kashmir. These often 'fantastic' legends, thus, were seamlessly incorporated alongside textual narratives to delineate the historical geography of Kashmir.

Pandit Intermediaries and Indigenous Tradition

It is worth discussing the role played by Kashmiri Pandit intermediaries in this project in some detail, since it was their intercession that determined the regional and local flavour of the translation project discussed here. I am not suggesting that the *Rajatarangini* project in Kashmir did not, as Nicholas Dirks has argued with reference to the consolidation of the Mackenzie collection in South India, usher in a 'new epistemic regime'.[114] It most certainly did; however, the process that led to the creation of this new epistemology regarding original texts and legitimate sources was deeply rooted in the literary and political contexts of late-nineteenth-century Kashmir. While the Kashmiri Pandits who mediated this process were not necessarily equal partners, they also cannot be seen as mere footnotes that disappeared as, again in Nicholas Dirks' words, 'authority and authorship were transferred from local to colonial contexts', in the process of the collection of local documents.[115]

I would suggest that the learned class of Kashmiri Pandits, far from being marginal to or becoming marginalized in the process, were in fact central to the articulation of historical knowledge about Kashmir. More importantly, they were able to redefine their own role in Kashmiri society through their participation in the orientalist and philological projects of this period.[116] The individuals that were indeed marginalized in this process, it is worth noting here, were the Kashmiri Muslim Persian literati, whose critical role in preserving and engaging with the Sanskrit texts, and participation in a Persian narrative tradition, went completely unrecognized. Nonetheless, Stein's project was influenced quite as much by the Persian narrative tradition—particularly in its geographical and picturesque descriptions of Kashmir, and in creating an archive for studying Kashmir's past—as by the Sanskrit tradition.

Buhler had first drawn attention to the importance of the learned class of Kashmiri Pandits in his *Report* by acquiring almost the entire catalogue of eight hundred Sanskrit manuscripts from the

Kashmiri Pandits of Srinagar and its environs. Further, he noted the names of several individuals who had helped him collate, read, and interpret the Sarada manuscripts. Some of these individuals, such as Pandits Sahajbhatta, Sahebram, Damodar, Ishwar Koul, and Govind Kaul were also involved in their own writing projects, including commentaries on and translations of Sanskrit texts such as *Rajatarangini* and the *Nilamata Purana* and dictionaries of the Kashmiri language.[117] In addition, Pandit Sahebram had prepared a descriptive survey of all the *tirtha*s of Kashmir, entitled *Kasmiratirthasamgraha*, along with painted maps of these sites, on the orders of Maharaja Ranbir Singh.[118]

Stein followed in Buhler's footsteps in purchasing hundreds of Sanskrit manuscripts from the private collections of Kashmiri Pandits while conducting research in Kashmir on the catalogue of the Raghunath Temple Library and *Rajatarangini* between 1888 and 1905.[119] Moreover, he early on requested the British Residency and Kashmir's State Council to provide him with Kashmiri Pandit assistants, in particular Govind Kaul, who had been engaged for several years in translating *Rajatarangini* into Hindi.[120] Kaul assisted Stein in a slew of activities until his death in 1899, including the critical edition and translation of *Rajatarangini*, the geographical surveys that led to the 'Memoir', and a collection of Kashmiri folktales, which Kaul transcribed in Devanagari simultaneously with Stein's record of them in Roman script. Indeed, for Stein, Kaul was an embodiment of the textual, geographical, and popular knowledge that structured the framework and content of the project discussed earlier.

As we have seen, Kashmiri Pandits, through the preceding centuries, had held important positions within and contributed to the vibrant manuscript culture of Kashmir, both in Persian and Sanskrit. As the trajectory of Govind Kaul's professional life illustrates, Maharaja Ranbir Singh's rule, with its patronage of translation and scribal activities in multiple languages, allowed Kashmiri Pandits to utilize their knowledge of Persian and Sanskrit to attain employment within the translation department and the Raghunath Temple Library. Kaul, for instance, was appointed to head the translation department

in 1874 and held the position until it closed with Ranbir Singh's death in 1885. He then took employment as a teacher in a Sanskrit school, and with the school's closure, he lost this job as well, by which time Stein had arrived in Kashmir. By the 1880s, as colonial intervention in Kashmir's political administration became more strident, a steady stream of officials and orientalists came to Kashmir to carry out statistical and linguistic projects, providing Kashmiri Pandits with a stable and lucrative source of employment as their assistants. In fact, Kaul turned down the offer of service in the Maharaja's private staff in 1892 to take permanent employment with Stein.[121]

A large part of Kaul's work with Stein involved collating and interpreting *Rajatarangini* manuscripts, and thus his influence on this project is particularly obvious. Kaul not only conducted wide-ranging research for Sanskrit manuscripts required by Stein for his endeavours, he also collated and recorded the contents of these manuscripts. These included several different manuscripts of *Rajatarangini* in Devanagari script, one of which was part of Kaul's own private library.[122] The Devanagari copies of the text, despite the primacy accorded to the Sarada codex, nevertheless profoundly shaped the critical edition. Moreover, since Kaul had been working on a Hindi translation of *Rajatarangini* and was well-versed in the popular traditions and topography of the Valley, he was able to help Stein interpret the chronicle itself. This was acknowledged by Stein in the preface to the critical edition: 'Pandit Govind Kaul's spirit of scientific enquiry and his thorough acquaintance with the history and geography of his country … have enabled him to find new explanations for many difficult passages of *Rajatarangini*. These explanations … have frequently influenced me in the selections of readings for my text.'[123] So impressed was Stein with Govind Kaul's erudition and personality that he compared him to Kalhana, the scholar-poet that Stein had spent a better part of his early career studying. It was thus high praise indeed. According to Stein, Kaul had the same combination of the qualities of a scholar and a poet, along with a 'keen eye for the realities of life, power of humorous

observation, and distinct interest in the practical affairs of the country'.[124]

Kaul's influence on the project of the production of historical knowledge on Kashmir is most visible in transmitting to Stein, along with Kashmir's textual records and the 'traditional lore' of the 'alpine land', ideas about Kashmir's distinctive regional identity since ancient times. As we have seen, the indigenous tradition of describing Kashmir as an auspicious landscape or 'garden of delights' (with Srinagar as a divine citadel at its centre) in its Sanskrit texts,[125] and as a paradise on earth and Solomon's garden in its Persian narratives, suffuses Stein's 'Memoir'. This text does not focus so much on the material remains and ruins of the ancient past on the landscape, as it does on the shrines and pilgrimage places in continuous use by the inhabitants of the Kashmir Valley since ancient times. Drawing as heavily as it does from Kashmir's textual and folk sources as a result of Kaul's mediation, Stein's 'Memoir' can be regarded, in one sense, as the contemporary orientalist expression of the indigenous idea of Kashmir as an especially blessed land due to its geographical location and natural features, articulated so often in a long series of Kashmir's written and oral texts. Kashmir's past, thus, through Kaul's intercession, came to be defined not just by European philological principles of 'authentic' texts in their purest form, but also by the landscape and its traditions itself. Despite being a vocal proponent of post-Enlightenment rationalist modes of historical inquiry, Stein accepted these as critical sources for the reconstruction of the living landscape of the past.

There is no doubt that the past Stein established for Kashmir was a classical one based on the primacy of the Sanskrit textual tradition. However, for him the very existence of *Rajatarangini*, as also the interpretation of its content, was determined by the regional context of Kashmir, its landscape and geography, and its written and oral traditions, which endowed the land with not only a history with 'a distinctly local character',[126] but also a distinct way of recording the past. Unlike J. C. Dutt, for whom Kashmir was a remote corner of India where the Aryans first made their appearance and which produced a text that could stand in for the history of India, for Stein,

Rajatarangini was, in fact, a regional history that was a product of and at the same time endowed Kashmir with a distinct geographical and historical character that 'nature itself' had bestowed on it.

This however, had the effect of reducing Kashmir's narrative and historical traditions to a single text in Sanskrit, with all other texts that came after it to be designated as 'sources', and no longer recognized as integral parts of a long, multilingual narrative tradition. Thus *Rajatarangini* was successfully rent asunder from Kashmir's (Persian) narrative tradition, for which it had been not merely a text, but a genre, and representative of its own long literary genealogy. The resultant naturalization of Kashmir as a historical space embodied by a text such as *Rajatarangini*—by now rendered iconic—facilitated its appropriation into the larger narrative of Indian history.

Interestingly, it was Stein's assertion of Kashmir's uniqueness that later Indian nationalists, such as R. S. Pandit, resisted most vociferously in their own translations, by claiming *Rajatarangini* as a national Sanskrit kavya rather than a regional history. This allowed for it, as well as Kashmir, to become an embodiment of Indian civilization, not merely a uniquely regional culture. Stein's historical method was thus attacked for focusing on historical and archeological facts rather than the deeper philosophical meanings within the text, and the further claim that this method also led to incorrect translations of the original. However, as we have seen, Stein's introduction discusses *Rajatarangini* as not simply a record of historical facts, but quite as significantly as an aspect of the tradition of historical kavya that cannot be adequately understood without reference to the geographical, textual, and oral context of Kashmir: 'Kalhana writes only for readers—or hearers—equally well-acquainted with contemporary Kasmir as he himself was'.[127]

Rajatarangini as National Literary Text

R. S. Pandit's English translation of *Rajatarangini*, published in 1935, illustrates both the status the text had acquired in colonial India by the early twentieth century, as well as the continued importance of the negotiation between region and nation and

literature and history to the Indian nationalist enterprise. This translation is especially interesting since it attempted to distinguish itself from Stein's earlier translation, even though it was based on Stein's critical edition of the text. Moreover, it accepted Stein's idea of Kashmir as a historical space—a distinct region—which through *Rajatarangini* could be presented to an incipient national audience, and be subsumed into the nation. Thus the region, while now a constituent part of the nation, continued to make its presence felt in Pandit's translation.

Pandit had personal and political motivations for translating *Rajatarangini* into English. Married to Jawaharlal Nehru's sister, and an active participant with the Nehru clan in nationalist activities, Pandit spent his many months of incarceration in colonial jails translating Sanskrit classics into English. The translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* held special meaning, since it was carried out for his father-in-law, Motilal Nehru, who, being unacquainted with Sanskrit, had expressed his regret at being unable to read this 'authentic history of the old family homeland'.[128] A lawyer by profession, but an Indologist by training and inclination (he was trained in Sanskrit studies at Heidelberg University and the Sorbonne), Pandit viewed the transmission of Sanskrit literature to the people of India as crucial for developing their sense of nationhood.

As a result, he was less interested in presenting *Rajatarangini* as an empirically sound record of past events, than in discussing it as an exemplary piece of historical literature. That Pandit saw himself as the recipient of a collective literary heritage through the text of *Rajatarangini* is evident from the fact that he placed his translation within the longer genealogy of indigenous translations of the text. Beginning with its Persian translation under Sultan Zain ul-Abidin, followed by Badauni's translation under the orders of Mughal emperor Akbar, and later Persian translations in the seventeenth century, Pandit also acknowledged previous European language translations such as those by H. H. Wilson, A. Troyer, and M. A. Stein.[129] It is worth noting, however, that the translation itself rarely draws on any sources besides the European translations and other orientalist writings.

The most striking influence on Pandit's translation, and not surprising given where Pandit was trained, was the German romantic-nationalist conception of literature. Vinay Dharwadker has defined this as 'a complete (totalized, totalizable) expression of the 'character', 'spirit', or racial and cultural identity of a nation'.[130] This late-eighteenth-century Herderian idea was revived in the early twentieth century in A. B. Keith's *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, published in 1920, which, rather than focusing on Sanskrit literature during the earliest moment of Indian civilization through the texts of the Vedas, presented instead Indian civilization's best moment, encapsulated, according to Keith, in the Sanskrit kavya.[131] Dharwadker argues that this led to the canonization of kavya as constitutive of 'the permanent master-paradigm of Indian poetry, across most languages, regions and historical situations on the subcontinent as a whole'.[132] According to the new orientalists such as Keith, this poetry, beginning with Kalidasa's works, reflected a certain style and produced, particularly in the period AD 700–1200, Indian literary and aesthetic theories such as the concept of *rasa* (poetic emotion), which were seen as reflecting, again in Dharwadker's words, 'the deepest and most valuable "expression" of the spirit of a race, people, society, or nation, or of national character'.[133]

Pandit's discussion of *Rajatarangini* as a historical kavya that encapsulated the literary heritage of the Indian nation, and more importantly, the character of its people, is squarely located in this tradition. While Pandit might have agreed with the definition of literature put forward by new orientalists such as Keith, however, he was less willing to accept their definition of history, in particular the relationship between literature and history in the Indian context. This is evident in his harsh criticism of Stein's translation of *Rajatarangini*, which Pandit claimed was overly concerned with the text's historicity rather than its literary and didactic qualities.[134] Pandit regarded *Rajatarangini*, much like other Sanskrit classics, as being above mere historical truth, since they embodied more universal, even eternal, truths. As Rosinka Chaudhury argues in a recent essay, early-twentieth-century Bengali historiography was characterized by

debates between the proponents of ‘stony, scientific history’, and those who saw history as the ‘life of the age’. Jadunath Sarkar, the prominent Bengali historian, in his reading of Bankim’s novels, argued that ‘the truth of historicism is limited, whereas the truth in Bankimchandra’s historical novels is above the historical truth and in the realm of what is eternally true’.[135]

In a similar spirit, Pandit launched a strident critique of the historical method employed by the historians and antiquarians of India, in particular Stein, whose use of this method was evident to him in his translation of *Rajatarangini*. While commending him on a ‘deep study of Kalhana’s work’, Pandit pointed out that Stein had missed the point of the text altogether by failing to ‘give an adequate conception of the work as a literary composition to readers unable to study the original’. Since Stein was so focused, in Pandit’s opinion, on historical facts and archaeological and topographical details contained within the chronicle, in the manner of a ‘stony, scientific history’, he ignored the poetic value of the text altogether, omitting to translate verses in ‘Kavya style’ or those that contained rhetorical or didactic descriptions.[136] It was these verses that contained the essence of the text, because it was these verses that allowed its readers to not just know their past but also to experience it. He noted, ‘Archeology has indeed laid bare for us the secrets of the dead past but the past eludes pursuit in the dust of antiquarianism’; however, the past through ‘Kalhana’s pen-pictures … is vivified and lives again’.[137]

Pandit’s ‘invitation’ to the translation argued that *Rajatarangini* was a work of such ‘great scope’ that to view it simply as a historical narrative would be to do it injustice. Instead, the narrative had the capacity to give enjoyment ‘as history, an epic, or a semi-tragic drama’, since it was a ‘poem … of great scope, a more or less complete picture of society, in which the bloody periods of the past are delightfully relieved by delicate tales of love, by episodes of marvel and mystery and by interesting digressions which the author permits himself’.[138] Even as a historian, moreover, according to Pandit, Kalhana tended toward ‘humanistic studies and toward art rather than toward economic life…. History, according to him, was

not something to learn, but something to make people live and understand life'.[139] Kalhana's poem, Pandit pointed out, was inlaid with all eight rasas, or sentiments—love, merriment, pathos, wrath, courage, terror, repulsion, and marvel—that were designed 'to teach the art of life'.[140]

The notes to Pandit's actual translation of the text are worth considering here, since they too sought to highlight these eternal truths embodied in *Rajatarangini*. This is evident, for instance, from the note accompanying the translation of verse twenty-one of the poem. This lengthy note charged that the text's earlier translations exemplified 'the gravity and nature of the errors occasionally committed by learned European scholars'. Pandit further argued in the note that the verse had been erroneously translated to read as a statement of Kalhana's historical methodology rather than being translated correctly as a statement of moral purpose, thereby discrediting 'the whole of whatever of the historical there is in the *Rajatarangini*'. So while Stein had translated the verse to read: 'This narrative (of mine), which is properly arranged and which resembles a medicine, is useful where the (accounts regarding the) place and time of kings are fluctuating (Lit. growing and diminishing)', Pandit's translation read: 'This saga which is properly made up should be useful for kings as a stimulant or as a sedative, like a physic, according to time and place'.[141]

Quoting his uncle and Sanskritist S. P. Pandit's views on the subject, Pandit emphasized in the note that Kalhana's intention in this verse was not to point out that his text either did or could be used to shorten or lengthen (i.e., amend) the terms of kings as noted in earlier narratives, but rather that it was a medicine to instruct kings who were displaying arrogance because their territories were expanding or those who were suffering from grief because their power was diminishing.[142] This confirmed the points made in the translator's note, in particular that Kalhana's eyes recorded the past 'in the hope that centuries later their observations would enlighten distant lands, relight dead suns and set dead moons shining upon the streams and snow-clad mountains of his native land'.[143] For Pandit, *Rajatarangini* had to be read not simply

as a history that could be used to correct the historical record, but rather as a work of art that encapsulated the essence of life.

Thus, the universal truths embodied in literature challenged not only the European historical method based on empirical research, but quite as significantly, they also informed the content of the past itself. Although Pandit set himself against the utility of the positivist historical method in uncovering the national past, his translation can still be placed in the tradition of early-twentieth-century secular nationalist historians of colonial India, particularly in their insistence on writing a non-communal history of the Indian nation. Many of these historians were based in Allahabad, where the first edition of Pandit's translation was published. The historian Shafaat Ahmad Khan, for instance, argued against the communalization of medieval Indian history in his speech to the All India Modern History Congress in1935: 'It is the spirit of a common Indian nationality, basing itself on the fundamental unity of the Indian people, and having its origin in numerous forces, spiritual, intellectual and economic, which have fused various communities and classes, provinces and States into an organic whole'.[144]

Another example of a nationalist historian during this period was the Aligarh-based Mohammad Habib, who not only presented a secular view of India's past, but did so by challenging the historical and translation methods employed by colonial historians such as H. M. Elliot. Habib excoriated Elliot for presenting an entirely inaccurate picture of medieval India in *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians* (1867), by focusing inordinately on the political activities of rulers rather than the lives and cultural activities of the people. This, according to Habib, was a result of Elliot's reliance on faulty translations of Persian histories and his failure to recognize the historical value of literary and cultural sources, such as *masnavis* and *maktubat* (Sufi literature).[145]

Rajatarangini's status as a national text was established partly due to the fact that it was written in Sanskrit—a language with 'pan-Indian pretensions'—and could therefore be seamlessly incorporated into the Indian literary canon. Moreover, it was not a religious epic or code of laws, but rather a secular text, a fact that particularly suited a secular nationalist such as Pandit. This allowed

for the text to be compared to Western classical literature while also emphasizing its continued value for Indian life and civilization.[146] According to Pandit, Kalhana was, not unlike Aeschylus or Homer, 'a poet of veracity and universality',[147] and at the same time, 'the heritage of India which has come to us through the medium of Samskrta is a living one'.[148] Asserting the primacy, universality, and continued importance of Sanskrit through a secular text allowed Pandit to perform the double act of appropriating this history of a region into the nation's collective literary heritage, thereby incorporating the region into the nation.

Pandit recognized *Rajatarangini* as 'the earliest extant history of Kasmir', although only secondarily after its primary function as national literature.[149] Its historical value, therefore, rested in the universal themes that it gave voice to, which cut across regions and defined the national narrative of Indian history, rather than the particularities of the history of Kashmir. Pandit's invitation stated that Kalhana 'lived a free man in an independent country', and 'loved his Arcadian homeland', whose natural beauty he described in great detail, and yet was free from 'narrow nationalism', since his poem displayed a love for Indian mythology and folklore, as well as its flora and fauna.[150] Further, much like Wilson and R. C. Dutt, Pandit utilized the narrative of *Rajatarangini* to corroborate certain ostensible facts about ancient Indian history, particularly those that shed positive light on the history of the nation by refuting colonialist claims about its past, including its autocratic forms of government, the inequities of the caste system, and the subordination of women.

So for instance, Pandit argued that Kalhana's poem proved that women in Aryan society, including royal women, were free from seclusion and oppression, and queens shared the throne equally with kings.[151] He traced the origin of Sati in Aryan society, through Kashmir's history, to the influence of the 'Scytho-Tartars', among whom it was usual for noblemen to commit suicide at the death of their lord. Monarchy itself in ancient India, according to Pandit's reading of *Rajatarangini*, was elective in the early period (much like the city states of Greece and Rome), gradually becoming both hereditary as well as mediocre.[152] Pandit's copious notes to the

actual translation pointed out that the researches of German orientalists such as Albrecht Weber had proven the existence of elective monarchy in the Vedic period.[153] Most importantly, drawing a direct line between Kashmir's history as evident in *Rajatarangini* and the history of the putative Indian nation, he stated, 'Neither caste nor birth was, however, bar to the holding of any civil and military posts. The Domba and the Brahman alike were soldiers and indeed some of the bravest warriors, generals and expert swordsmen were Brahmans—a state of things we see repeated later during the national revival in the Maratha period.'[154]

Jawaharlal Nehru's foreword to the translation adds yet another interesting layer to the dialogue between region and nation in Pandit's presentation of *Rajatarangini* to its readers. Steeped as he was in the tradition of European positivism, Nehru initially appeared skeptical of the value of the text, attempting to decide whether it was history or poetry, since its claims to being the former were negated for him by its 'vague and sometimes fanciful' early sections. Nevertheless, the foreword quickly warmed up to the text as presenting evidence of Kashmir's ties to India: 'Kashmir had been the meeting ground of the different cultures of Asia, the western Graeco-Roman and Iranian and the eastern Mongolian, but essentially it was a part of India and the inheritor of Indo-Aryan traditions'.[155]

But it was to the text's descriptions of Kashmir—the region—that Nehru seemed to pay the most attention and consider most valuable, and that also appeared to destabilize the seamless incorporation of region into nation. As Nehru read Kalhana's rendition of Kashmir as 'the "land of the Sun god"' where among other miracles, 'realizing that the land created by his father is unable to bear the heat, the hot-rayed Sun honours it by bearing himself with softness in summer', and 'in the evening "the daylight renders homage to the peaks of the towering mountains"', the 'call of the old homeland from whence we came long, long ago' stirred in him.[156] While for Nehru, history and poetry might have gone 'ill together', it was their intertwining that allowed the national past to be inflected with the dreams and desires of the region.

Pandit's translation, which he admitted was not meant for 'the learned fraternity', performed several related functions. Drawing on the German romantic-nationalist definition of literature, it presented *Rajatarangini* as not merely a history, but rather a certain genre of Sanskrit literature that embodied the essence of the Indian nation. In the process, it challenged the colonial historical method based on empirical, fact-based research, arguing that a narrative of the past devoid of imagination was not only meaningless but also unhistorical, since it could not represent the higher truths that embodied the best characteristics of the national past. It was literature that gave history—particularly the history of the nation—meaning and it was precisely Kalhana's creativity and artistic sense that prevented the text from making prejudicial and partial misrepresentations.[157] Not surprisingly, it was by focusing on *Rajatarangini* as national literature in Sanskrit rather than regional history, that Pandit drew the region firmly into the narrative of Indian history.[158] Although subsumed, the region was not completely erased, coming alive in Kalhana's pen-pictures of Kashmir and the articulation of Nehru's palpable desire to return to his homeland.

Rajatarangini as History in the Postcolonial Period

By the middle of the twentieth century, Kalhana's text had been completely wrenched out of its regional context, and its 'national' character as an example of historical writing from India and a valuable source was well-established. In a chapter devoted to *Rajatarangini* in his book *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, published in 1957, U. N. Ghoshal, professor of history at Presidency College, Calcutta, claimed the text without question as an example of ancient Indian historical literature, presenting it moreover as a product of 'the instinct of a true historian'.[159] He discussed *Rajatarangini* as an impartial historical text, in which Kalhana drew 'vivid pictures of classes and types of his countrymen with their characteristic strength and weakness', despite its description of legends.[160] Moreover, Ghoshal attributed Kalhana's 'shortcomings'

as a historian, particularly in the earlier sections of the narrative, much like Stein, to the defects within his sources, Kashmir's general geographical isolation, and the nature of its society, steeped as it was in religious superstition. Nonetheless, he maintained that 'Kalhana … distinguishes, however unconsciously, between the legendary and the historical periods of Kashmir'.[161]

Most scholarship on the text through the twentieth century, similarly, engaged with *Rajatarangini* as a single text, measuring its historical value based on its ability (or lack thereof) to live up to the standards of a nineteenth-century positivist history, even as historians drew liberally on its contents as a source to reconstruct the history of early India and Kashmir. In his book, *Puranic Chronology*, D. R. Mankad argued that *Rajatarangini*'s early sections could not be dismissed as unreliable and legendary. In fact, according to him, 'Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* is very helpful to us in reconstructing the ancient history of India proper. Relation between the Kashmirian political history and political history of India proper is much more intimate than is usually accepted'.[162] As a result, *Rajatarangini*'s life in continuation in Sanskrit, and its place within the Persian historical tradition in Kashmir, was almost completely elided. On the other hand, its late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century English translations to a large extent shaped scholarly and popular engagement with the text, as well as Kashmir's historical tradition as a whole in the postcolonial period. Stein's translation in particular, and to a lesser extent Pandit's, provided access to its contents to scholars unfamiliar with Sanskrit, thereby further enhancing the text's utility as a historical source.

While for scholars such as Mankad and Ghoshal, Kalhana's text stood in for an Indian historical consciousness and its contents allowed for a reconstruction of India's ancient past, Kashmiri nationalists and scholars engaged with the text on a different level. As noted in the earlier chapter, historical production in Persian had declined by the early twentieth century in Kashmir. The space was filled, to an extent, by Urdu narratives, such as the histories by Muhammadin Fauq, a Punjabi who claimed Kashmiri descent. Fauq's histories, as we have seen, did not place themselves within Kashmir's historical tradition and were written with the purpose of

disaggregating the inhabitants of Kashmir into religious groups while tracing their ethnic genealogies. This, of course, has to be located in the context of the general trend at the turn of the twentieth century towards drawing the contours around community/ethnic identities, encouraged, to a large extent, by the colonial state itself.

Other Kashmiris, such as Gwasha Lal Kaul, a journalist who later became the founder and editor of *The Kashmir Times* and *The Kashmir Chronicle*, wrote the history of Kashmir in English that was published in serialized form in the *Akhbar-i Am*, Lahore, in the 1920s, and later appeared as independent publications in Srinagar. It is noteworthy that Kaul claimed descent from Kashmir's historical tradition and named the earlier historians of both Sanskrit and Persian narratives, including Kalhana, Jonaraja, Srivara, Haider Malik, Muhammad Azam, and Narayan Koul, as his inspiration, noting in particular that 'Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* is almost a revelation'.[163] Moreover, much like the authors of earlier Persian tarikhs, he devoted an entire chapter to 'Phenomena in Kashmir', which lists the 'places and things in Kashmir which are peculiar in themselves and some of them quite beyond ordinary human comprehension'.[164]

For the broader Kashmiri nationalist movement, which gathered momentum in the 1930s and 1940s, however, Kashmir's history and its historical tradition held little resonance beyond providing material for political slogans that claimed Kashmir's historical enslavement by outsiders since its conquest by the Mughals. While Stein's presentation of Kashmir as an exceptional region with its own, distinct history in his translation of *Rajatarangini* was embraced by Kashmiri nationalism, the text itself is completely absent from the annals of the movement. The explanation for this lies, in part, in the context for the emergence and articulation of Kashmiri nationalism. Kashmiri nationalist ideas were formulated against the Dogra state and its ideologies of legitimacy which cast Kashmir as a font of Sanskrit classical civilization, and hence Hindu, leading to a neglect of the demands and rights of the Kashmiri Muslim community. Since the idea of *Rajatarangini* as a Hindu text had been crystallized by this period, in no small part through the activities of orientalists such

as Stein, it is not surprising that the text did not become a symbol of Kashmir or its past for the Kashmiri nationalist movement.

In the immediate post-independence period, the emergence of history as a professional discipline in Kashmir fell victim to the unsettled state of Kashmir's position within the Indian union. The University of Kashmir did not become a fully functional institution until 1965. Kashmiri historians, for their part, in their attempts to make history-writing conform to professionally acceptable standards, increasingly distanced themselves from the earlier tradition of historical writing in Kashmir. *Kashir*, G. M. D. Sufi's voluminous history of Kashmir which was first published in 1949, has to be mentioned here, because it gives one a sense of the scholarly status of *Rajatarangini* and Kashmir's long historical tradition in the post-independence period, and the role played by its English translations in this regard. Sufi, a Kashmiri who was serving as Registrar of Delhi University at the time of the book's publication, begins the preface to the two-volume text with Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. He notes that although Kalhana's text 'scans' Kashmir's history, it is 'at best … the *Shah-nama* of Kashmir in the sense of a loose, versified narrative'. He then credits Stein's English translation for recasting it in the form of a history that could be used by a 'serious student of the early history of Kashmir'.[165] The Persian histories of Kashmir, which remain unnamed, are dismissed in a sentence.

Sufi presented himself as a latter-day Stein who was out to rescue the history of Kashmir from oblivion, into which, in his opinion, it had clearly fallen.[166] The first sentence of the preface (immediately followed by a dismissal of *Rajatarangini* as a 'loose versified narrative') says it all: 'It is strange that the Valley of Kashmir has had so many to describe its hills, its dales and its lakes, its snows and streams and shades, but hardly any to narrate its history or tell the story of what the Valley has given to the world'.[167] Thus, he undermined in one stroke the status of Kalhana's text, its continuations, as well as the Persian historical narratives of Kashmir, as embodying a legitimate historical tradition. Needless to say, Sufi's two-volume text is based almost entirely on these

Sanskrit (in translation) and Persian narratives, which while not legitimate histories, were certainly valid as sources.

Similar sentiments are echoed in P. N. K. Bamzai's *A History of Kashmir: Political, Social, and Cultural*, which was published in 1962. As Bamzai noted at the outset, unlike *Rajatarangini* and the other histories of Kashmir, his text did not focus merely on the 'charming landscape' of Kashmir or its kings, but rather its people and their cultural traditions. Significantly, like Sufi before him, Bamzai viewed the focus on landscape/place rather than people and their contributions as a sign of the absence of a historical consciousness within Kashmir's narrative tradition. For Bamzai, history, if properly executed, could only be the history of the nation and its people, and not a place—ideas that echoed nationalists of yore, such as R. C. Dutt and R. S. Pandit. *A History of Kashmir*, thus, was written as a history of one of the nation's constituent parts,[168] and not surprisingly, one of its main sources was Pandit's translation of *Rajatarangini*.[169]

Thus, while drawing its methodological legitimacy from the discipline of history, Bamzai's text was ideologically firmly aligned with the political concerns of the Indian nation state. Bamzai, who was Special Officer in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, was also the editor of the journal *Kashmir* and thus closely allied to the Indian and Kashmiri states. In addition, the book was composed in the context of the discussions in the Security Council regarding the Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir and the more recent (at the time of the book's publication), Sino-Indian border dispute.[170] Thus Bamzai focuses on highlighting the idea of Kashmir as a secular space where individuals possessed a 'broad and humanistic outlook on life'. In his foreword to the book, Jawaharlal Nehru presented Kashmir's past (as encapsulated in *Rajatarangini* and Bamzai's text) as evidence of the blending of various cultures 'that resulted in a relative absence of communal feeling', and ultimately, 'the refusal of the people of Kashmir to accept the so-called two nation theory was not a mere political development but had its roots in their long past and the culture they had developed'.[171]

Further, that Bamzai was attempting to hitch Kashmir's past to the master narrative of Indian history is most apparent in the fact that unlike earlier histories of Kashmir, *A History of Kashmir* is divided into the ancient, medieval, and modern periods, with the ancient period aligned with Hindu dynasties, the medieval period beginning with the foundation of the Sultanate and ending with the end of Muslim rule in Kashmir, and the modern period concerned with Sikh and Dogra rule, as well as the Kashmiris' 'struggle for freedom' from the Dogras and the events during independence and partition.

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir was equally interested in promoting a certain perspective on Kashmir's political and literary history in the 1950s and 1960s that emphasized Kashmir's syncretistic culture. Indeed, Bamzai's book—which championed Kashmir's unique 'non-communal' culture—would not have been possible without the personal support of Sheikh Abdullah (Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir), who officially sanctioned the removal of thousands of files from the Jammu State Archives for Bamzai's perusal for a period of two years.[172] Furthermore, throughout this period, and despite widespread political repression, officially sanctioned journals in Kashmiri and Urdu such as *Gulrez*, *Shiraza*, *Soun Adab*, *Hamara Adab*, among others, published hundreds of articles on Kashmiri history, language, and literature. Many of these were published under the auspices of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages, which was created as an autonomous body through a proviso of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir in 1958 to promote the composite culture of Jammu and Kashmir,[173] known more popularly as the ideology of *Kashmiriyat*. In addition, the Research and Publications Department of the Jammu and Kashmir government carried out a program of collecting, copying, preserving, and publishing hundreds of historical, hagiographical, and literary manuscripts in the 1950s under the directorship of Sahibzada Hassan Shah, who had been appointed by Abdullah to head the department in 1951.[174]

Meanwhile, the Government of India made attempts to culturally integrate Kashmir into the Indian nationalist imagination through

journals such as *Kashmir*, which paraded the literary lights of Kashmir in successive issues amidst ominous-sounding articles entitled, 'Kashmir—An Integral Part of India'.[175] The same journal included an article on Kalhana and *Rajatarangini*, resurrecting it as a text that made Kashmir unique within India, while at the same time claiming the author and his text as belonging to the Indian literary heritage.[176] *Rajatarangini* was further appropriated into the Indian nationalist agenda and alienated from Kashmir's political context through its Hindi translations. In his Hindi translation, published in 1969, Raghunath Singh, for instance, argued that the text could be read to validate Indian claims over Kashmir in the context of the Indo-Pak conflict over the territory.[177]

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The effects of the new epistemic regime ushered in by orientalists such as Stein, which undermined the coherence of Kashmir's narrative tradition by dividing it along linguistic, and inevitably also religious lines, continued to linger in postcolonial Kashmir. While Kalhana was identified as a Kashmiri Pandit author who had composed a chronicle in the twelfth century, the later Persian narratives—within which this chronicle was embedded as both historical tradition and a font of knowledge about Kashmir's past—were designated as mere interpolations and crude imitations. As a result, the orientalist project contributed to the ultimate decline of Kashmir's Persian historical culture.

At the same time, and despite its regional vocabulary, the orientalist project was responsible for shifting *Rajatarangini*'s centrality from regional to nationalist projects, while at the same time emphasizing Kashmir's uniqueness as a regional space. As a result, the text (and by extension Kashmir), became the stage on which debates over the ideas of history and literature and the uneasy dialogue between the region and nation were carried out in colonial India. Thus, even as *Rajatarangini* lost its resonance within Kashmir's nationalist and literary culture in the early twentieth century, ideas about Kashmir's exceptionality became the driving force of the newly emergent discourse of Kashmiri nationalism.

The transformation of *Rajatarangini* from regional to national text and its tentative resurrection as a regional text in contemporary Kashmir reminds us of the deeply political nature of historical knowledge production across the centuries in Kashmir. Earlier Persian tazkiras and tarikhs drew on Persian, Indo-Persian, and indigenous ideas and oral and textual narratives to articulate their own visions of space and the past. The English, Hindi, and the more recent Urdu and Kashmiri translations of the *Rajatarangini* narratives (to be discussed in Chapter 6), were similarly shaped by multiple ideological inheritances, including the colonial historical project, orientalist philological notions, Indian nationalist beliefs, indigenous ideas of space and time, and political dogmas. In all these instances, *Rajatarangini* served as a means to reimagine Kashmir's past in order to legitimize a variety of political and social agendas in the present. However, while earlier narratives regarded *Rajatarangini* as the font of a longer tradition and themselves as its continuations, the colonial and postcolonial engagements with *Rajatarangini* approached it as a single and singular historical source. These engagements also produced a colonial archive of legitimate sources that determined the shape of future historical writing on Kashmir.

Historical culture in Kashmir had never been merely textual, however, as a varied oral tradition nourished and sustained Sanskrit and Persian narratives through the centuries. The ideas, events, and stories related within these texts, thus, continued to circulate in Kashmiri stories and poetry, which had acquired a new vibrancy with the emergence of Kashmiri as the language of the people in the nineteenth century. The next chapter turns to these oral-textual transactions within the Kashmiri narrative public in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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[1] As we have seen in Chapter 1, the idea that Kashmir's Persian historical narratives were passive imitations of earlier Sanskrit texts persists in Indological scholarship into the twenty-first century. See, for instance, Slaje (2004). It is also worth reiterating here that the Persian narrative tradition flourished parallel to orientalist activities throughout the nineteenth century, and even engaged with

orientalist ideas regarding texts and sources while establishing its own archive for a study of Kashmir's past, as discussed in the previous chapter.

[2] Scholarship on the role played by indigenous 'informants' in the creation of colonial knowledge in British India is broadly divided into two camps: those who argue that colonial officials marginalized native assistants, who merely provided the raw material that was then formulated into colonial categories; the assistants thus collaborated but never actively contributed to the forms that knowledge took. Others argue that indigenous informants were more active participants in the creation of colonial knowledge, thereby shaping its actual outcome. For a more detailed discussion of this debate, see Wagoner (2003), pp. 783–6. More recently, scholars have made a case for transcending this binary of passive collaboration versus active resistance to take a more nuanced look at the activities of indigenous informants, such as pandits and other native assistants. This scholarship argues that not only did native assistants impact the nature of colonial knowledge, but also used it to articulate their own ideas about Indian knowledge, as well as a means to further their social and educational roles. See, for instance, Hatcher (2005), pp. 683–723; Dodson (2007). Other scholarly challenges to the dichotomy suggest that colonial knowledge production was a result of an intellectual 'encounter'. See Mantena (2012).

[3] Mantena (2012), pp. 14–15 (emphasis in original).

[4] Ibid., p. 22. For a discussion of colonial knowledge as fractured, open-ended, and dialogic, see also the essays in Sengupta and Ali (2011).

[5] See, for instance, Mantena (2007), p. 398.

[6] Dharwadker, 'Orientalism and the Study of Indian Literatures', in Breckenridge and van der Veer (1993), pp. 175–6.

[7] Quoted in Anon. (1857), p. 235. See also, Weber, trans. Metcalfe (1857).

[8] Krishnaswamy (2004–2005), p. 2.

[9] Wilson (1825), p. 2.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Stein, 'Introduction', in Stein (1894), pp. i–vi. The Maharaja patronized all scripts and languages in his court, including Persian, as is evident from the number of Persian calligraphers, many of whom were Kashmiri Pandits, who copied the classics of Persian literature during his rule. See Ibrahim (1997), pp. 57–8, 128. The Dogra court's patronage of Indo-Persian literary culture is also evident from the continued production of Persian tarikhs in this period, as discussed in the previous chapter.

[12] Kabir (2009), esp. Part I.

[13] van der Veer (2001), esp. Chapter 5.

[14] Niranjana (1992).

[15] van Bijlert, 'Sanskrit and Hindu National Identity in Nineteenth Century Bengal', in Houben (1996), p. 349.

[16] Niranjana (1992), pp. 3–4; see also Chapter 2.

[17] Hannoum (2003), p. 62. For a complex discussion of how ideas of colonial knowledge production can be applied to historiography, and the significant interventions of indigenous scholars in this process, see Talbot, 'Contesting Knowledges in Colonial India', in Talbot (2011), pp. 171–212.

[18] Wilson (1825), p. 1.

[19] Wilson (1825), p. 3.

[20] Ibid., pp. 2–3, 5–7. Wilson described at some length the painstaking process through which he acquired the Sanskrit manuscripts of *Rajatarangini*, but made no such point about the way he acquired the Persian manuscripts, which illustrates that the latter were more readily available. Noting the easy accessibility of Persian manuscripts in Kashmir, Vigne, who traversed through the Kashmir Valley in 1835, stated that they were 'common enough'. See Vigne, vol. I (1842), p. 375. It is also worth noting that the earliest European encounter with *Rajatarangini* was recorded by the Frenchman Francois Bernier in the seventeenth century, who wrote in his travelogue that he was in the process of translating a Persian translation of the text into French. Bernier was most likely referring to the early-seventeenth-century Persian narrative, *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*. See Bernier (1968) [1891], pp. 393–4.

[21] Wilson (1825), p. 6; Stein, 'Introduction', in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 29.

[22] Wilson (1825), pp. 7, 82.

[23] Ibid., pp. 82–3.

[24] Ibid., pp. 97–100.

[25] Ibid., p. 85.

[26] Ibid., pp. 83–4.

[27] Troyer (1840–52).

[28] Anon. (1850), pp. 209–10.

[29] Ibid., pp. 216–18.

[30] Ibid., p. 220.

[31] Ibid., p. 210.

[32] Ibid., p. 212.

[33] As several recent works have demonstrated, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a creative period for historical composition in various

regions of India as individuals debated how best to record the past of the nation. This gave rise to hybrid forms of history-writing that composed the past of the collectivity, such as historical essays, memoirs, travelogues, and historical novels. See, for instance, Deshpande (2007); K. Chatterjee (2005), pp. 1454–75; Orsini (2002); Dalmia (2001), pp. 59–79; K. Chatterjee, 'Discovering India', in Ali (1999), pp. 192–227.

[34] Kaviraj (1995), p. 107.

[35] J. C. Dutt, 'Preface', in J. C. Dutt, vol. III (1990) [1898], p. i.

[36] J. C. Dutt, 'Preface', in J. C. Dutt, vol. I (1879), p. ii.

[37] Ibid., pp. ii–iii.

[38] Ibid., p. iii.

[39] J. C. Dutt, 'Preface', in Dutt, vol. II (1990) [1887], p. ii.

[40] The emergence of history as a science of Man in the nineteenth century removed, in Sanjay Seth's words, 'God or gods … [as] historical actors, because the subject of history is Man, and only Man'. See Seth (2008), p. 216.

[41] J. C. Dutt, 'Preface', in Dutt, vol. I (1879), p. iv.

[42] Ibid., pp. iii–iv.

[43] J. C. Dutt, 'Preface', in Dutt, vol. III (1990) [1898], p. iii.

[44] R. C. Dutt (1880), p. 2.

[45] Ibid., p. 3.

[46] Ibid., p. 24. R. C. Dutt wrote several textbooks on the history of early Hindu civilization based almost entirely on Sanskrit literature. Their main aim was to provide Hindu students with a knowledge of their past before the 'Mahommedan conquest' and familiarize them with the 'texts of our ancient authors'. See R. C. Dutt (1963) [1888], pp. x, xiii.

[47] R. C. Dutt (1880), p. 13.

[48] R. C. Dutt (1880), pp. 11–12.

[49] Ibid., p. 18.

[50] Ibid., pp. 6–8.

[51] Ibid., p. 23.

[52] Dalmia (2001), pp. 65–6.

[53] Harischandra in Brajratnadas (1954), p. 275.

[54] Ibid., p. 279. In a brief official history of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, the Dogra State not only recognized Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and its

continuations as the ‘connected and trustworthy account of the Kashmir Valley’, but also drew the Dogra dynasty’s descent from Jambu Lochan, one of the first ‘Hindu’ rulers of Kashmir mentioned in *Rajatarangini*. ‘A Brief History of the State’, Old English Records, 1921–134R, Jammu State Archives.

[55] Harischandra in Brajratnadas (1954), p. 277.

[56] Dalmia (2001), p. 69.

[57] Harischandra in Brajratnadas (1954), p. 276.

[58] Buhler (1877), pp. 53–5.

[59] Ibid., p. 58.

[60] The copying and selling of manuscripts by Kashmiri Pandits was certainly not a new enterprise in late-nineteenth-century Kashmir. See Stein (1900), pp. 187–94, which discusses a late-seventeenth-century deed of sale for a Mahabharata manuscript in Sarada script, written in both Persian and Sanskrit, and signed by several Pandits. See also Ibrahim (1997), pp. 57–8.

[61] Interview with T. N. Ganjju, Srinagar, Kashmir, 20 July 2009. According to Gulshan Majeed, the pandits of his village in Bijbehara, Kashmir, were Sanskrit and Persian scribes, who earned a living copying manuscripts for families to read aloud at home or maintain as part of their intellectual inheritance. Interview with Gulshan Majeed, Srinagar, Kashmir, 3 October 2009.

[62] Buhler (1877), pp. 26–8, 33, 60.

[63] Buhler and another prominent Indologist, F. Kielhorn, wrote a letter to the Director of Public Instruction in Bombay, which was reprinted in *The Pandit*, the monthly Sanskrit journal of the Benares College, in 1866, requesting funding for the preparation and publication of critical editions of Sanskrit classics for use in Indian high schools and colleges. The letter also laid down the rules for editing Sanskrit manuscripts to prepare such critical editions. See Misra, Part One (1991), pp. 199–202.

[64] Buhler (1877), pp. 29–33.

[65] Ibid., p. 33.

[66] Buhler (1877), pp. 52–3.

[67] Stein (1891), p. 3.

[68] Buhler (1877), p. 61.

[69] Ibid., pp. 58–9.

[70] In 1918, the manuscripts were transferred to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, where they reside to this day. Naravane (1958), pp. 259–61.

[71] Stein, ‘Introduction’, in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 4.

[72] Biographical information on M. A. Stein is culled from the following: Pandita (2004); Walker (1998); Mirsky (1977).

[73] Quoted in Perrill (1976), p. 614.

[74] Stein campaigned with the XIth International Congress of Orientalists to issue a resolution, which was formally passed on 10 September 1897, that Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini* needed a translation and an introduction to be complete. This led the Government of Punjab to issue him official leave to work on the project, which he carried out as a joint employee of the Kashmir darbar and the Government of India. His monthly salary while working on the project was Rs. 1000. Old English Records 1898/25, Jammu State Archives.

[75] Stein wrote several letters to the British Residency in Jammu and Kashmir requesting specific Kashmiri Pandits to help him with the task of preparing the catalogue; he also delineated exactly where and to whom the catalogue was to be distributed. The list included learned institutions, libraries, and individual scholars in Europe and America; government officials, learned institutions, and learned individuals in India; and Indian princes and chiefs. Old English Records 1889/40, Jammu State Archives.

[76] Stein, ‘Preface’, in Stein (1894), pp. x–xi.

[77] That Stein regarded himself as Buhler’s intellectual heir in all matters regarding *Rajatarangini* is evident from the fact that before the publication of the critical edition, he took the collated text to Europe to get Buhler’s advice ‘in all questions connected with the proposed edition’. Stein (1891), p. 6.

[78] Stein, ‘Preface’, in Stein (1979) [1892], p. vii.

[79] Stein, ‘Introduction’, in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 46.

[80] Ibid., pp. 47–8.

[81] Stein, ‘Preface’, in Stein (1979) [1892], p. xi.

[82] Ibid., p. xiii.

[83] Stein, ‘Preface’, in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. xiv.

[84] Stein, ‘Introduction’, in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 29.

[85] Ibid.

[86] As Bayly has noted, colonial knowledge, ‘though it usually asserted superiority, was … often derived from Indian sources’. See Bayly (1999), p. 313.

[87] Stein, ‘Preface’, in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. xiii.

[88] Stein, ‘Introduction’, in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 37.

[89] Ibid., p. 78.

[90] It is interesting to note that in their brief discussion of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam describe it as 'weak historiography', partly because of what they characterize as Kalhana's hyper-real descriptions of events. This, in their view, renders the text into a collection of 'encapsulated novellas'. See Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam (2001), pp. 258–9.

[91] Stein, 'Introduction', in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], pp. 38–9.

[92] Ibid., p. 39.

[93] Sreenivasan (2007), pp. 133–4.

[94] Sreenivasan (2007), p. 195.

[95] Chand and Kothari (2003), pp. 78–80. See also, Kapadia, 'Alexander Forbes and the Making of a Regional History', in Simpson and Kapadia (2010), pp. 50–65.

[96] Saikia, 'Gait's Way: Writing History in Early-Twentieth-Century Assam', in Aquil and Chatterjee (2008a), pp. 147–51.

[97] James Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas* also falls under this category. For a more detailed discussion of this text, see Deshpande (2007), pp. 72–7.

[98] Stein, 'Preface', in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. xxiv.

[99] Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], p. 366.

[100] Stein, 'Introduction', in Stein, vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 132.

[101] Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], p. 347.

[102] Stein, 'Preface', in Stein (1979) [1892], p. xx.

[103] Ananya Jahanara Kabir reads the 'Memoir', and Stein's larger project, solely in terms of the imposition of the mechanisms and practices of colonial modernity, such as mapping and surveying, on Kashmir's landscape. See Kabir (2009), pp. 90–4. Similarly, David Arnold, in the larger context of India in the early nineteenth century, argues that the designation of India as part of the tropics through imaginative and practical descriptions of its landscape by Europeans and colonial officials, was marked by a 'profound cultural disjuncture and a high degree of 'epistemological violence' directed against indigenous forms and systems of knowledge'. See Arnold (2006), p. 8.

[104] Carter (1988), p. xxii.

[105] Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], p. 371.

[106] Kar (2004), p. 1.

[107] Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], pp. 351–85. It is noteworthy that classical notices were generally preferred as sources by colonial cartographers while colonial archeologists preferred Chinese travelogues. Kar states that Indologists read 'stylized expositions in the high Sanskrit literary traditions' as 'veiled geographical reports' to identify the exact location and name of India and the placement of Assam within it. Kar (2004), p. 22.

[108] Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], p. 386 (emphasis mine).

[109] Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], pp. 439, 445.

[110] Ibid., p. 385.

[111] Bayly (1999), p. 305. Bayly uses this phrase to describe the works of eighteenth-century Indian Muslim topographers.

[112] Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], p. 367.

[113] Ibid., p. 366.

[114] Dirks, 'Colonial Histories and Native Informants', in Breckenridge and van der Veer (1993), p. 310.

[115] Ibid., p. 301. Aparna Kapadia argues that Alexander Forbes' history of Gujarat, *Ras Mala*, was the product of a complex process of engagement among Forbes, native interlocutors such as Dalpatram Dahyabhai, and Gujarati and Rajasthani bards. See Kapadia, 'Alexander Forbes and the Making of a Regional History', in Simpson and Kapadia (2010), pp. 57–64.

[116] For a survey of the involvement of individual Kashmiri Pandits in orientalist projects in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Kashmir, see Pandita (2002).

[117] Buhler (1877), pp. 26–8, 33, 60.

[118] Inden, 'Kashmir as Paradise on Earth', in Rao (2008), p. 537; Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], pp. 383–4.

[119] See Clauson (1912), pp. 587–627.

[120] Old English Records 1889/40, Jammu State Archives.

[121] Stein (1923), pp. 10–14.

[122] Stein (1923), p. 16.

[123] Stein, 'Preface', in Stein (1979) [1892], p. xix.

[124] Stein (1923), p. 9.

[125] See Inden, 'Kashmir as Paradise on Earth', in Rao (2008), pp. 523–61. The continuation of this idea in the Persian historical tradition has been amply demonstrated in the earlier chapters of this book.

[126] Stein, ‘Introduction’, in vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 30.

[127] Stein, ‘Introduction’, in vol. I (1979) [1900], p. 40.

[128] V. L. Pandit (1979), p. 169.

[129] R. S. Pandit, ‘Translator’s Note’, in Pandit (1968) [1935], pp. xiii–xv.

[130] Dharwadker, ‘Orientalism and the Study of Indian Literatures’, in Breckenridge and van der Veer (1993), p. 167.

[131] Indeed, in this book, Keith presents Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini* as an example of a Sanskrit historical kavya par excellence. See Keith (1920), pp. 158–72.

[132] Dharwadker, ‘Orientalism and the Study of Indian Literatures’, in Breckenridge and van der Veer (1993), p. 178.

[133] Ibid., pp. 178–80.

[134] Pandit, ‘Translator’s Note’, in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. xv.

[135] Chaudhury, ‘History in Poetry’, in Aquil and Chatterjee (2008), pp. 405–6. See also, Kaviraj (1995), pp. 112–15.

[136] Accordingly, Pandit’s translation includes these eighty-odd didactic and poetic verses that Stein’s translation overlooks. Pandit, ‘Translator’s Note’, in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. xv.

[137] Pandit, ‘Invitation’, in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. xix.

[138] Ibid., pp. xx–xxi.

[139] Ibid., pp. xxx–xxxi.

[140] Ibid., p. xxi.

[141] Pandit (1968) [1935], pp. 7–9 (21n).

[142] Ibid., p. 7 (21n).

[143] Pandit, ‘Translator’s Note’, in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. xvi.

[144] Quoted in Hasan (2002), p. 191.

[145] Mohammad Habib, ‘An Introduction to the Study of Medieval India (A.D. 1000–1400)’, in Nizami, vol. I (1974) [1931], pp. 3–32. There were many others who questioned the colonial historical method in early-twentieth-century India for providing a deficient definition of history. For instance, Yogesh Chandra Shastri, a Sanskrit scholar, argued that the Puranas could not be dismissed as ahistorical simply because they were poetic compositions. In fact, far from displaying a definition of causality as the mere superficial linkage of one event with another, the Puranas embodied a much more complex and meaningful idea of causality. It is interesting to note that rather than lauding *Rajatarangini* as the only work of Sanskrit literature that could be considered a history, Shastri instead dismissed it

as a work that displayed a superficial sense of causality by presenting Kashmir's past as a chronological series of events. This, Shastri argued, was possibly because Kashmir was tainted due to its association with the 'Tartars', who had their own mode of recording the past. Shastri (1908), pp. 248–9.

146 As Sumathi Ramaswamy has demonstrated, the report of the Sanskrit Commission set up in independent India to investigate the status of Sanskrit in the new state, presented Sanskrit as a language at par with Greek and Latin, which could, at the same time, lose its elite pretensions and serve as the language of the common people. See Ramaswamy (1999), p. 369.

147 Pandit, 'Invitation', in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. xxiii.

148 Pandit, 'Translator's Note', in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. xvii.

149 Pandit, 'Invitation', in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. xix.

150 Ibid., pp. xix, xxi–xxii, xxxi.

151 Pandit, 'Invitation', in Pandit (1968) [1935], pp. xxxii–xxxiii.

152 Ibid., p. xxxix. It is worth noting that early-twentieth-century Indian intellectuals, such as, for instance, K. P. Jayaswal, editor of the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, were rewriting early Indian history from the perspective of its constitutional past, describing ancient Hindu polities as republics. Soon after its publication in 1924, Jayaswal's book was on university syllabi across India. See Jayaswal (1943) [1924], p. vii.

153 Pandit (1968) [1935], p. 320 (703n).

154 Pandit, 'Invitation', in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. xxxii.

155 Nehru, 'Foreword', in Pandit (1968) [1935], p. x.

156 Ibid., p. xi.

157 Pandit (1968) [1935], 21n.

158 It is noteworthy that the Sahitya Akademi reprinted Pandit's English translation of the text in 1968 as a 'vernacular' text from Kashmir. The Akademi did not begin publishing translations of Kashmiri poetry and other literary narratives until the 1980s. On the other hand, no Persian narratives from Kashmir have been translated and published under the auspices of the Akademi.

159 Ghoshal (1965) [1957], p. 161.

160 Ibid., p. 158.

161 Ibid., pp. 165–6.

162 Mankad (1951), p. 1.

163 Kaul (1946) [1925, 1932], p. vii.

[164] Ibid., pp. 73–9.

[165] Sufi, vol. I (1974) [1949], pp. i–ii.

[166] Ibid., pp. ii–iii.

[167] Ibid., p. i.

[168] Bamzai, 'Foreword', in Bamzai (1962), pp. xi–xii.

[169] Bamzai (1962), pp. 32–5.

[170] Bamzai, 'Foreword', in Bamzai (1962), p. xi.

[171] Nehru, 'Foreword', in Bamzai (1962), pp. viii–ix.

[172] Rehbar, *Shiraza* 46, no. 1 (undated), pp. 26–7.

[173] The *Sakafat* (Cultural Heritage) issue of *Shiraza*, published in 1966 by the Academy, was devoted to articles on the literary, artistic, and philosophical traditions of Jammu and Kashmir. It began with notes by the prime minister, vice president, and education minister of India, and the governor and prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir, lauding the Academy for highlighting and strengthening the rich and vibrant cultural heritage of the state. See *Shiraza*, Sakafat No., vol. 5, no. 1 (1966).

[174] M. M. Ibrahim (1984–1985), pp. 41–3. Hassan Shah was himself responsible for editing and publishing the first volume of Khuihami's Persian historical narrative, *Tarikh-i Hassan*, in 1954. Indeed, the Research and Publications Department revived interest in Kashmir's Persian tradition for a brief moment by collecting, and sometimes also publishing and translating, Kashmir's tarikhs, tazkiras, and other narratives in the 1950s and 1960s. The manuscript library of this department remains the largest repository of Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts from Kashmir. It holds multiple manuscript copies of the narratives discussed in this book, not all of which are in good condition.

[175] Anon. (1958), pp. 222–4. *Kashmir* was a publication of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

[176] Dhar (1958), pp. 227–8, 242.

[177] Singh, 'Prakkathan', in Kalhana (1969), pp. ka–cha.

5

THE KASHMIRI NARRATIVE PUBLIC
Textuality, Orality, and Performance

On a crisp autumn morning in Mujgond, a village 30 kilometres outside Srinagar, Muhammad Ismail Mir, a *dastaan goh*, or traditional Kashmiri storyteller, recounted to me the story about how he came to be a peddler of tales. As his grandchildren flitted in and out of the small living room in a modest dwelling shaded by majestic Chinar trees and surrounded by vegetable patches being tended to by his daughters-in-law, the eighty-year-old Mir told me that he was an unlettered man to whom God had given the gift of memory so he could remember and narrate close to a thousand tales. When he was a child, a wandering mystic (*fakir*) came to him in a dream and asked Mir to entertain him with a story in return for a couple of walnuts. He told the mystic that he did not know any stories since he was a just a child, but the mystic replied that all he had to do was to try to narrate and the stories would come to him. When Mir opened his mouth to protest once again, he began to recite a story, and since the night of the dream, he has continued to do so.[1]

We have seen thus far how significant stories were to Kashmir's narrative tradition in multiple languages—stories about the origins of the land, stories about its sacred springs and their inhabitants, stories about its Sufi mystics and Rishis, stories about its kings, stories about the character of its people, stories about the origin of their names, and so on.[2] Indeed, it was the interweaving of stories through their narratives that lent *tazkira*s and *tarikh*s a picturesque, literary quality that came to be the hallmark of a distinctive Kashmiri

historicity through the centuries.[3] In some ways, the stories and accretions to them as they travelled through textual narratives allows one to glimpse the interplay between the long Kashmiri narrative tradition and its shifting external contexts. Equally significantly, it illuminates the symbiosis between textual and oral narratives in Sanskrit, Persian, and Kashmiri—and those who wrote, performed, and consumed them—as they circulated within what I have termed as the Kashmiri narrative public.

The meanings of the stories changed not only over the course of retellings, but also through an interaction with textual narratives, which themselves supplied different versions of the tales over the course of time through an interaction with changing public memory. For instance, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, stories from which are still told in Kashmir, drew heavily on Kashmir's oral and written tales, which, along with the text itself, underwent several iterations within the Persian narrative tradition from the fifteenth century onwards.[4] As Walter Lawrence, Settlement Commissioner of Kashmir, noted in his book, *The Valley of Kashmir* (1895), 'Most headmen can read and have had access to translations of the *Rajatarangini*. These headmen repeat the stories of Kalhana's Chronicle, and the uneducated villagers have thus acquired a general idea of the history of their country'.[5]

The textual and the oral thus came together in the storytelling tradition to create a network of shared, public historical memory that provided ordinary people with a means to experience their surroundings in relation to a long historical tradition, as well as engage with the past itself. Storytelling was (and to some extent still is) the way in which events and characters from the past were brought to life and became a part of the everyday narrative of Kashmiri society. A variety of storytellers and performers, including dastaan goh, *ladishah* (minstrels), professional reciters of folktales, folksongs, and the sayings and verses of mystics and mystic poets, and *bhand*s, as well as older men and women, were responsible for a constant recitation and circulation of stories. Moreover, much like the textual tradition, the storytelling tradition too drew its repertoire of characters and events, as well as its narrative structure, from both local and universal contexts, thereby creating a uniquely Kashmiri

idiom that was nonetheless located in wider sacred and literary geographies. This kept the largely illiterate society entertained, while at the same time allowing the people to become a part of and participate in the tradition that shaped the idea of Kashmir as a discursive entity and its people as a social community.

In the dissemination of familiar stories and tropes from the narratives we have discussed thus far through the storytelling tradition, one can see the bridging of the divide between history and memory, history and myth, written and oral narratives, and time and space. In the absence of the professionalization of history, there was no necessary opposition between the purveyors of popular historical memory and the authors of textual historical narratives, as their productions continued to inform each other.[6] History, in this sense, was not about presenting a 'true' picture of the past, but rather about experiencing it through the acts of writing, reading, listening, and performing, thereby allowing people to understand their contemporary situation and be morally transformed 'in relation to past events'.[7] The significance of *khanqah*s for the maintenance of this narrative public cannot be over emphasized, as they brought together authors and narrators of textual and oral narratives, while also providing divine sanction to their endeavours.

This chapter provides a snapshot of the trajectory of the circulation of stories through textual manuscripts, printed materials, and oral media by focusing on intertextuality, the individuals involved in disseminating them, and the content of the stories as they took on multiple meanings in a variety of contexts in the Kashmiri narrative public, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By doing so, it hopes to provide readers with a sense of how ordinary Kashmiris and the Kashmiri language participated in, shaped, and was in turn shaped by, the rich Persian textual tradition that has been presented thus far, and by extension, contributed to the articulation of the idea of Kashmir as a place.

Historical Memory in the Narrative Public

South Asian historiography has recently turned its attention to examining the circulation of ideas and identities within Indian public

spheres, particularly in terms of the relationship between orality and literacy, both before and after the advent of colonialism. C. A. Bayly's seminal work, *Empire and Information*, for instance, argued for the existence of an indigenous public sphere in north India in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which he referred to as the Indian ecumene. This he defined as 'the form of cultural and political debate which was typical of north India before the emergence of the newspaper and public association, yet persisted in conjunction with the press and new forms of publicity into the age of nationalism'.[8] The discussions within this ecumene, which included debates over religious law, custom, and practice, as well as descriptions of the history and topography of Hindustan, were sustained, according to Bayly, through a complex interaction between written and oral communication, with the former being used to 'reinforce oral culture and debate'.[9]

Bayly points out the importance of not making a distinction among politics, literature, and history while examining the nature of the ecumene, since fables, treatises, more conventional historical narratives, poetry, panegyrics and many other kinds of oral and written texts circulated in tandem to represent particular political situations and carry covertly political messages. In this way, the Indian ecumene brought elite and popular political culture together through public recitations and performances of events and characters from textual traditions at public venues such as fairs, festivals, shrines, and red light districts by travelling storytellers, wandering bards, puppeteers, actors, and courtesans.[10] He thus illustrates that North India possessed a vibrant system for the dissemination of information before the widespread use of print media, which moreover continued to exist alongside new forms of communication well into the nineteenth century.

In a more recent study of the transmission of memories and ideas of *bhakti* formulated around the fourteenth-century Maharashtrian religious figure, Sant Namdev, over several centuries in western and northern India, Christian Lee Novetzke argues for the existence of 'a public'. He defines this as 'a social unit created through shared cultural phenomena, and reinforced by demonstrations in public of these shared cultural phenomena', that, however, exists outside the

sphere of influence of the state and is not necessarily linked to modernity.[11] For Novetzke, publics are social entities imagined by those constructing them through their 'reflexively circulating discourse', and are defined by several characteristics, including self-organization, circulation and exchange in a marketplace of ideas, creation of a world around themselves, and most importantly, an idea of time and historical remembrance.[12] This definition of a public allows Novetzke to argue that the bhakti public around Namdev was cultivated and sustained through 'a common stock of memory and mnemonic practices … made cohesive by a kind of social agreement'.[13] The performance of *kirtan*s (devotional songs) at pilgrimage places, fairs, and festivals, was critical, according to Novetzke, for the sustenance of a public around Namdev's memory.[14]

In Novetzke's view, a public cannot exist without remembering and therefore memory is the most important aspect of his definition of this social space; thus the bhakti public around Namdev became 'a form of public memory'.[15] In keeping with this, Novetzke draws an analytical division between history and memory as two distinct acts of remembrance. According to him, public memory of Namdev as sustained through performance and recollection does not need proof or a sense of chronological time required by historical narratives tied to courts and other political and economic relationships. In other words, the bhakti public surrounding Namdev does not attempt to pin Namdev down as a historical figure linked to a particular period within a particular socio-political context, as does the historical scholarship on him. Instead, it functions in the realm of collective recollection and 'shared pools of legend' that allows Namdev to transcend time and space and captures the essence of his soul.[16] Thus, while history requires literacy, memory can exist in the realm of orality and performance. As Novetzke points out, his distinction between history and memory is a heuristic one, made to highlight the emotionality and sensuality of the practices of memorialization around the Namdev tradition as opposed to the rationality of historical works about him. But the work as a whole illustrates that

there is, in fact, a fair amount of interaction between the two forms of remembrance.

Farina Mir's study of the Punjabi literary imagination in colonial Punjab brings together the production, circulation, performance, and consumption of literary texts in what she terms the 'Punjabi literary formation'. According to her, the Punjabi literary formation consisted of individuals who actively participated in these shared practices and created 'a literary tradition with a clear sense of its own contours and history'.[17] Not only was the literary tradition self-consciously aware of shared literary practices and ideas, but the *qisse* (tales), such as *Hir Ranjha*, she argues, incorporated a historical imagination that drew the contours of locality, caste, and gender in a much more inclusive manner than allowed for by a reading of Punjabi politics in this period through the lens of communal and caste distinctions and the resultant strife. As she notes: 'This formation was expansive because it was not class-, caste-, religion-, or gender-specific.… Belonging entailed engagement and experience: composing or performing a Punjabi text, for example, or knowing how to interact with a singer during a public performance'.[18]

What remains central to Mir's argument is the existence of a fluid line among print, scribal, and oral cultures as Punjabi qisse in manuscript and printed form incessantly crossed this line within the Punjabi literary formation. The qisse were consumed by diverse audiences not only through reading, but also through the pleasure of listening and responding to them as they were orally performed in musical and other sacred and secular assemblies in the Punjab. This not only made these texts the products of the individuals and communities participating in the literary formation, but equally significantly, helped them shape the individuals and communities themselves. Further, much like Novetzke's concept of a public, the Punjabi literary formation as defined by Mir, functioned in a realm independent of the state, and its politics 'did not translate into political action in state arenas'.[19] This is significant because it allows for an examination of those sites on which knowledge and ideas within Indian society circulated that existed outside the realm of

colonial institutions and influence at the height of colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The ideas of an indigenous ecumene, a public, and a literary formation, as discussed here, provide valuable insights into the symbiosis between literacy and orality, as well as the creation and transmission of texts within a variety of Indian regional contexts. They are thus suggestive for thinking about how Kashmiris across the literacy divide may have participated in Kashmir's narrative tradition through an engagement with the Persian hagiographical and historical narratives I have discussed in previous chapters. I propose the term 'narrative public' to define the socio-cultural network within which historical memory was created and maintained in Kashmir, in somewhat similar and yet distinct ways than in Maharashtra or the Punjab. The nineteenth-century Kashmiri narrative public was a complex space created through a reciprocity among a textual historiographical tradition in Persian, existing largely in manuscript form; a poetic tradition in Kashmiri, partly in manuscript, partly in print, and partly in oral form; and the Kashmiri storytelling tradition, which existed wholly within a variety of oral performance genres.

Unlike the ecumene as defined by Bayly, but similar to Novetzke's public and Mir's literary formation, the Kashmiri narrative public was only tangentially linked to the state, and remained autonomous, for the most part, of direct and indirect state and colonial influences. Indeed, it was the lack of patronage of the Kashmiri language in favour of Persian by successive rulers of Kashmir until the late nineteenth century (followed by Urdu) that accounted for its emergence as a language with a poetic tradition conducive to oral rather than written transmission. At the same time, while Persian may have been patronized by the state, the authors of Persian historical narratives were not always court historians and scholars, as we have seen in previous chapters, but were more often linked to Sufi orders and hospices. The rich interactions between written and oral texts in Persian and Kashmiri, thus, carried on within the narrative public simultaneously with orientalist activities in the nineteenth century that were increasingly marginalizing Persian and its narrative tradition, while valourizing Kashmir's Sanskrit texts.

And, these interactions continued throughout the period of the gradual demise of the Persian textual tradition in the first half of the twentieth century. Kashmiri and Persian, thus, coexisted as different, yet deeply related vernaculars that shaped the idea of Kashmir as a sacred landscape within the narrative public.

Despite being free of state and colonial influences, however, the ideas that circulated in the Kashmiri narrative public were deeply political, in that they sought to include Kashmiris in the politics of place-making in the context of their past, thus also allowing them to contemplate their contemporary condition. The stories that most commonly flowed through the oral part of the narrative public, not surprisingly, were the ones we have already seen appear in textual narratives, particularly the trope of origins, the transactions between spiritual and temporal authority, and the relationships between rulers and their subjects.

As a result, I suggest here that the Kashmiri narrative public was infused with historical memory—memories about the origin of the land, its rulers, its saints, its transition to Islam, among other themes, which were mutable and atemporal, but nonetheless anchored to particular historical events and characters. In this, I differ from Novetzke's insistence on drawing a distinction, if only a heuristic one, between history and memory in his discussion of a bhakti public around Namdev, with the former being characterized by rationality and fixity in time and space within texts, while the latter allows Namdev to travel through the centuries in oral performances. In the case of Kashmir, the term historical memory is applicable precisely because historical production was not part of a professionalized discipline in the nineteenth century (in fact, as I have pointed out earlier, professionalization of history did not take place in Kashmir at all), and therefore, the lines of distinction between the discipline of history and practices of commemoration, and the sources for the two, were not drawn.

Writing of the past had always been and continued to be an act of commemoration in Kashmir—of the creation of the land and of those who had shaped it. Prachi Deshpande has defined historical memory as 'visions of the past that are enthusiastically invoked by the broader population of a society', and are informed by debates

generated by both scholarly and popular histories.[20] Historical memory in Kashmir certainly included a broad cross-section of Kashmiri society, but its content was shaped not so much by debates produced through the interaction between scholarly and popular histories about what made legitimate history. Instead, it was driven by the circulation of and meanings attached to a common repertoire of stories among the Sanskrit and Persian textual traditions and the Kashmiri textual and oral traditions, as they drew on and informed each other.

That history and memory functioned in tandem with each other, and not as diametrically opposed entities, is evident in stories about the Sufi saints and Rishis of Kashmir, which were—and continue to be—not only a part of the Kashmiri oral tradition, but have also been enthusiastically recorded in all Persian tarikhs and tazkiras of Kashmir. Both historical and hagiographical narratives (I have argued earlier that the latter was a legitimate genre of recording the past) were concerned with simultaneously locating these individuals as historical figures, while also presenting them as universal, semi-divine figures who transcended the boundaries of time and space. The oral traditions about these figures, such as Sayyid Ali Hamadani, Shaykh Hamza, or Nund Rishi, repeated every single time to me (with slight variations) by Kashmiri scholars and laypeople alike on being asked any question related to Kashmir's history, are versions of the stories that appear in textual narratives. While at times these individuals were able to give me a textual reference for the story they were relating, more often than not, I was told that they had 'heard' the story, either from their spiritual guide (*pir*) or their elders.[21]

This illustrates two features of the Kashmiri narrative public: first, within it these and other figures appeared not only as historical actors that determined the course of the narrative of Kashmir's past and thus the very nature of the land, but also as examples of universal, moral conduct in everyday life; and second, rather than being two distinct streams within it, textual practices and oral practices of memorialization were mutually interdependent.

Furthermore, there was a circular movement of knowledge between textual and oral traditions as they mutually constituted each

other. There has long been an acceptance of the broad teleology of movement from oral to written forms of expression within a society as it progresses into modernity.[22] In the Kashmiri narrative public, and in South Asia as a whole, one can see the co-existence of the written and the oral as overlapping entities, and the movement of ideas from textual to oral sources and vice versa, at any given historical moment. Indeed, even after the advent of print culture in late-nineteenth-century Kashmir, texts remained hybrid, in that they were recorded in manuscript and printed form, and were being transmitted through oral and performance mediums as well.[23]

There are many examples of Persian tales and incidents from Persian texts being translated into Kashmiri poetry in the nineteenth century, which were then performed orally by wandering minstrels and storytellers. For instance, Persian qisse such as *Yusuf-Zuleikha*, *Qissa-i Mahmud Ghaznavi*, and Hamidullah Shahabadi's *Akbarnama* were recast into Kashmiri by poets such as Mahmud Gami and Wahab Pare, and were (and still are) performed by dastaan goh and *bhand pether* groups (street theatre) in cities and villages across Kashmir.[24] At the same time, the movement of knowledge from the oral to the textual tradition was an equally important characteristic of the Kashmiri narrative public. An examination of textual narratives, in particular tazkiras of saints, or even tarikhs such as Saadullah Shahabadi's *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, or Hassan Shah's *Tarikh-i Hassan*, reveals that for their authors both earlier textual narratives and contemporary auctours (informants)—those individuals who related stories about a particular historical figure or event in question from personal experience—were equally legitimate sources for reconstructing the past.

Indeed, the idea of having 'heard' a story from someone who had lived through a particular time, or one who had himself heard a saint preaching or the saint's disciple recounting stories about his spiritual master, runs through textual narratives, and was meant to endow the text with special credibility. The text, through its informants, and their act of having heard and the act of hearing by the authors of the narratives, thus became an extension of personal experience formed in conjunction with a larger and longer community of

knowledge.[25] In some ways, this had more authority than a textual narrative that recorded events through recourse to texts that had only been consumed visually by the individual author. As Nile Green rightly argues with reference to the location of knowledge in early modern India, 'Words—indeed writing as such—had diverse locations, the most authoritative of which were not those on paper…, but those incorporated into persons through these mnemonic and incorporative means'.[26]

It was through orally circulating stories, then, that texts tapped into a complex cultural system of historical memory about events and individuals so critical to the maintenance of the Kashmiri narrative public. In *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, for instance, Saadullah Shahabadi begins the verses on the creation story of Kashmir by stating that he had heard the story from his *ustaad* (teacher).[27] Birbal Kachru's discussion of the destruction wrought by the Afghans and the corporeality of their tyranny on Kashmiris in *Tarikh-i Kashmir* was based, according to him, on the testimony of his elders. This was clearly meant to bestow the description with more authority and poignancy than if his source had been a text.[28] Despite Hassan Shah's insistence on naming his textual sources in *Tarikh-i Hassan*, it is clear that his discussion of the life of Nund Rishi in the third volume of the text was drawn from oral recitations of his verses, which he used to prove or disprove well-accepted facts about the popular Rishi's life.[29]

There is ample evidence to suggest that the verses of and stories about the lives of the two indigenous mystic poets, Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, had been circulating in Kashmiri oral culture since at least the fifteenth century, if not earlier. In fact, some Kashmiri scholars have suggested that the Rishis used the bhand pether medium to communicate their spiritual message to common people through theatrical performances.[30] When it comes to textual narratives, however, while Nund Rishi was discussed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century histories and hagiographies, Lal Ded and Nund Rishi do not make an appearance together in Persian historical narratives from Kashmir until the latter half of the eighteenth century, when *Bagh-i Sulaiman* described their lives and

deeds at length.[31] This implies that Kashmiri society was well aware of the existence of these two figures long before they were recognized as historical figures in Kashmir's historiographical tradition.

As pointed out earlier, moreover, the histories based a discussion of their lives almost entirely on their verses and stories about them, as well as earlier texts. This was because reading and writing were at all times active exercises shaped simultaneously by multiple texts. For instance, a folio of one of the manuscript copies of *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, which discusses the life and deeds of Nund Rishi, has a number of annotations in the margins by its copyist, or perhaps a reader, that describe incidents from the Rishi's life from an earlier source, the tazkira entitled *Asrar-ul Abrar*.[32] In most cases, both oral and textual traditions attempted to present Lal Ded and Nund Rishi as Kashmiri mystics embedded in its landscape, and linked through a common spiritual genealogy created through a set of shared biographical moments, even though they were not historical contemporaries.

Most texts narrate the story of Lal Ded approaching the infant Nund when he refused to take his mother's milk and whispering into his ear that if he was not ashamed to be born, he should not be ashamed to drink from his mother's breast.[33] Other versions of the story record Lal Ded as giving the infant Nund her own breast to drink from to prevent him from starving to death, thus creating a literal and spiritual bond between them.[34] As M. H. Zaffar recalls, 'Despite being an illiterate Kashmiri, my mother remembered many a *vakha*s of Lal-Ded and many a *shrukh* of Nund-Rishi, which she used to recite to me when I was a child. She used to tell me the story of Lal-Ded, and how she suckled the newly born Nund Rishi'.[35] The popularity of these stories is evident from their translation into a proverb that circulates in Kashmir to this day: 'Zeni yeli ni mandichok / Cheni kyazi mandchok?' (When you were not shy to be born / then why are you shy of drinking/breastfeeding?).[36]

This discussion illustrates that the Kashmiri narrative public was sustained by a transmission of ideas, stories, and knowledge amongst oral and written sources through complex genealogies of

speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The stories that were created and sustained simultaneously within the textual and oral realms, and narrated by regular individuals or professional performers, were consumed by Kashmiris for pleasure and entertainment, sometimes through social satire, but also, as evident from the aforementioned proverb, as common sense, as a part of the humble narrative of everyday life.[37] At the same time, storytelling allowed ordinary Kashmiris to participate in more lofty discourses about their land and its status as an especially blessed realm through its divine origin, its physical attributes, and the peregrinations of numerous saints and other divines on its landscape, embodied in their tombs and graves that marked the land. As Greg Dening put it so well:

> Historiography I take to be those sensual, emotional, mindful, bodily, spiritual processes by which peoples collectively or personally read the signs of that surrounding metaphoric presence of the past and know that they truly belong to that past and that past truly belongs to them. Historiography … is a common, everyday phenomenon.… It is Everyperson's fine sense of the poetics of their history making.[38]

Kashmir as a Historically Aware Society

As stated earlier, Walter Lawrence noted in his book, *The Valley of Kashmir*, that Kashmiris, including 'uneducated villagers' had 'a general idea of the history of their country'.[39] He proceeded to write a chapter on Kashmir's political history based not on textual sources, but rather on 'events which seem best remembered by the people—events which even now are common talk of the countryside'.[40] I suggest here thus that Kashmir was a historically aware society, which I define as a society that was aware of its past through linked anamnestic practices of textual commemoration and oral remembrance. Kashmiris, despite their general lack of literacy, remembered certain events and individuals from their past through constant retellings and continuous interpretations of stories about them. This section explores the narrative of Kashmir's history from a popular perspective to give the reader a sense of how Kashmiris

understood their own past and the legendary and historical characters and events that enlivened it.

The travelogues of European travellers and colonial officials who made their way through Kashmir in the nineteenth century are replete with stories about its past, usually not drawn from texts, but rather from the stories told to them by their local guides or ordinary Kashmiris whom they met along the way. In fact, Europeans, including Indologists, interacted with Kashmir's Persian historical narratives largely through the manifestation of stories from them in oral traditions. As he travelled through Kashmir to chart its historical landscape, M. A. Stein went so far as to state that oral traditions were more reliable than textual sources in recounting the location and significance of the sacred sites of Kashmir.[41] The Austrian traveller, Baron Charles Von Hugel, who traversed Kashmir in the 1830s, seemed particularly interested in locating the source of the idea of Kashmir as earthly paradise, and in pursuit of that goal, was at least aware of the existence of textual sources such as *Rajatarangini* and its continuations, eighteenth-century Persian narratives such as Dyadmari's *Waqiat-i Kashmir* and Narayan Koul's *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, as well as Mughal sources such as the *Ain-i Akbari*. Not surprisingly, he declared both the Sanskrit and Persian narratives, particularly the former, to be 'defective', because they were steeped in legends and myths.[42] He did not, however, apply the same criteria to judge oral traditions, and his account of Kashmir's past, which is interspersed through the travelogue, is drawn almost entirely from the stories told to him by his Kashmiri guide, Sufi mystics, and village headmen, or from the stories told to earlier European travellers, such as G. T. Vigne.[43]

Hugel's guide, Mirza Ahud, entertained him with 'tales of his native land', many of which were set in the pre-Islamic period, and were most likely drawn from *Rajatarangini*, Persian narratives, and popular traditions attached to specific sites in the Valley. Most of these stories painted a vivid picture of the relationship amongst Nagas (original inhabitants of Kashmir before its emergence as land, who appear as serpent gods), Brahmans (who became the inhabitants of Kashmir after its recovery from water through divine intervention), and the rulers of Kashmir. For instance, in this

particular tale, a Hindu king was punished by the ruler of the Nagas for coveting the wife of a Brahman, who was the Nagaraja's sister, and had been given to the Brahman by the Naga himself. The king of the Nagas destroyed the covetous ruler's city, sinking it in his anger into the Jhelum.[44] When asked by Hugel 'whether Mohammedan writers admitted such sheer nonsense … into the histories of Kashmir', his guide replied that they might not have had much to say about serpent-gods, but 'they related wonders of another kind'.[45]

This illustrates that Hugel's guide was aware of the existence of both Sanskrit and Persian historical narratives and their content, since this tale appears in many of them with slight variations. Further, this particular telling itself has a few variations from its many textual versions, which means that the story circulated in textual and oral traditions alike. The story itself, as many others told by Kashmiris, were often about the overstepping of the boundaries of propriety by either Brahmans, or rulers, or both, and always ended with Nagas restoring the power balance. Much like the Persian historical narratives composed at this time, the oral tradition too was concerned with presenting a picture of Kashmir as a land shaped by the influx of successive groups of people. And oral traditions in particular were interested in the past interactions among these different groups.

The stories most often recounted by Kashmiris were not surprisingly about the origins of Kashmir from the lake Satisar. As Lawrence pointed out, most Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir believed that the valley was 'once a vast lake on which the goddess Parvati sailed in a pleasure boat from her mountain home on Haramak in the north to Konsa Nag lake in the south'.[46] Drawing from a vast repertoire of conjoined legends which we have seen appear in various forms in textual narratives, the oral tradition narrated the familiar tale of sage Kashyap, the demon Jalodhbhava, who had taken residence in the lake, and the efforts of the gods to vanquish the demon by draining the waters of the lake. In this particular version, it was Parvati who killed the demon by dropping a mountain on him once he was exposed after the lake was drained. This mountain, known as Hari Parbat, Lawrence was told, had a

great shrine in honour of Parvati at its summit. According to another origin story narrated to Lawrence, Kashyap was a mighty wrestler who suddenly became besotted with the idea of worshipping at the one thousand temples that were buried under the waters of Satisar. He pierced the mountain near Baramulla, allowing the waters to drain, and the sacred sites to be revealed.[47] The idea of Kashmir as a sacred landscape recovered through divine intervention and settled through complex negotiations among its original inhabitants and those who migrated there later was an integral part of the popular historical imagination in nineteenth-century Kashmir.

The latter theme is evident in the story about Kashmir's settlement after the waters receded from the Valley, leaving behind a host of smaller demons and beings (*dev*s and *jinn*s) to control the region in the winter months, with Brahmans inhabiting the land in the summer months. One winter, according to this tradition recounted to Lawrence, an old Brahman was left behind in Kashmir, while others had departed for the drier and warmer regions of Kishtwar. He chanced to meet the lord of the Nagas, Neelnag, who gave him the *Nilamata Purana*, a close study of which enabled him and the others to perform the necessary rituals to appease the demons and inhabit the land permanently. A little later, according to oral traditions, when the Buddhists became strong under the rule of Hushka, Jushka, and Kanishka, the Nagas took affront and killed many Buddhists by bringing down ice boulders from the mountains on them. At this stage, Kashyap's descendant, Chandra Dev, intervened to reinstate the rites of the *Nilamata Purana*.[48] A text—the *Nilamata Purana*—thus served as a means to restore cordial relationships between different groups and bring about order in Kashmir.

The origin of Islam in Kashmir, not surprisingly, occupied an equally important place in the Kashmiri popular historical imagination. The Englishman, Vigne, who travelled through Kashmir in the 1830s, remarked that he had been told by Kashmiris that the country was converted to Islam seven hundred years ago by the saint Bulbul Shah, whose traces Vigne claimed to have been unable to locate in any book.[49] As we have seen, however, Bulbul Shah's conversion of the ruler, Rinchen, to Islam was very much a part of the Persian historical and hagiographical traditions since the late

sixteenth century and seems to have been part of the oral tradition as well. In another version of this tradition related to Hugel, Raja Ratan (Rinchen) wanted to become a Muslim but did not know how to go about it, whereupon Bulbul Shah heard his pleas and came flying from Baghdad to convert him and the entire population to Islam.[50] The oral tradition of the advent of Islam to Kashmir, thus, was an admixture of a group of stories related to the transactions among holy figures, rulers, and subjects, and like them, drew Kashmir into the larger geography of the Islamic world.

An incident usually recounted in textual sources to present Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's (known popularly as Budshah, or the great king) tolerance towards his Hindu subjects was slightly altered in the oral tradition and linked to Kashmir's ongoing Islamization. As told to Vigne, Budshah's son, the prince, shot the water pot of a Hindu woman with an arrow, thereby breaking it. When she informed her father, who was a holy man, of this incident, he prayed and caused the prince to fall gravely ill. In most textual sources, at this point in the story, Budshah goes to the holy man and seeks his forgiveness on the prince's behalf, and once the prince recovers, he takes steps to include Hindus in the administration by encouraging them to learn Persian, and so on. In the oral version, however, when Budshah found out that his son had been cursed by the Brahman, he forced Hindus to eat cold food and learn Persian, leading most Hindus to take flight, leaving only eleven Pandit families in Kashmir. These persecutions led Budshah to fall ill, and while on his deathbed, he requested the Hindu families to return to Kashmir to cultivate the land. At this point, he suddenly recovered while the Hindu holy man died, as his spirit had passed into the Sultan's body. Henceforth, the Sultan demonstrated a great zeal in restoring Brahmans to their former status in Kashmiri society.[51] The oral tradition, thus, celebrated the sagacity of rulers who fostered political and spiritual accommodation between religious groups in Kashmir.

Nevertheless, much like in textual narratives, a celebration of accommodation (by Sultan Zain ul-Abidin) coexisted in oral traditions with laudatory descriptions of forced Islamization by his father, Sultan Sikandar. Kashmiris described the Sultan, according to Lawrence, as a 'brave and cultured' man. Oral traditions about

Sultan Sikandar mostly agreed with the textual descriptions of his reign, narrating his temple-breaking activities in great detail, as well as his persecution of Brahmans, who were forced to convert, die, or go into exile. They also recounted legends about the discovery of inscribed stones amidst the ruins of the destroyed temples prophesying the Sultan's activities, to which he purportedly remarked that 'if he had known of these inscriptions he would have spared the noble piles, for he had no wish to fulfill the predictions of an idolatrous people'.[52] While his son's reign was presented as a period that witnessed the flourishing of arts, crafts, music, and literature, Sultan Sikandar's reign was narrated as one of progress in the realm of Islamization.

Oral traditions described the period after Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's rule as one of chaos as the Chak family, identified as Shia in the stories, emerged on the political landscape of Kashmir in competition with the Magareys and Rainas. The most well-known story about the Chaks narrated by Kashmiris was that the founder of the dynasty was a man of large stature who was the offspring of a Kashmiri woman and an amorous demon (who appears as an enormous snake in nineteenth-century Persian narratives, most likely a reference to a Naga).[53] Despite being described as brave warriors, the Chaks were presented in oral traditions as unable to found a stable dynasty, due largely to their personal foibles and policies, such as an indulgence in decadent lifestyles and the persecution of Sunnis.[54] Yacub Khan, the last Chak ruler, was in particular remembered as a courageous man for resisting the Mughal onslaught, but one who failed to unite Kashmiris behind his rule by persecuting Sunnis and Hindus. Several individuals from these groups sent a deputation to Akbar encouraging him to conquer Kashmir; Akbar in turn promised religious tolerance and freedom from enslavement for Kashmiris. As a result, according to oral traditions, Yacub Khan's army deserted him in order to join the Mughal side, thereby forcing him to retreat.[55]

Oral traditions recounted the rule of the early Mughal rulers, especially that of Akbar and Jahangir, as largely benevolent. The travels of the Mughal rulers to Kashmir, which occupy a substantial

part of the discussions of Mughal rule in textual sources as well, were described at great length by Kashmiris. As Lawrence noted, ‘One hears so much of the junkettings and picnics of Jehangir and his lovely consort, the “light of the world”, of the courtiers vieing [*sic*] with one another and with their royal masters in the construction of splendid gardens, that one is apt to think that the Mughal rule in Kashmir was one continuous pageant of pleasure’.[56]

At the same time, however, the sense that Mughal rule had brought an era to an end and cost Kashmiris their spirit of independence and ability to defend themselves against outsiders had begun to pervade the Kashmiri popular imagination. For instance, Kashmiris told several European travellers, including Vigne, who had asked them the reason why they wore loose cloaks (known as *pheran*s), that the Mughal Emperor Akbar had forced them to remove their more martial clothing in favour of the plain cloak. This, as well as being forced to eat their food cold and stale was an attempt by the Mughals to crush their warlike spirit, a story not found, interestingly, in any textual historical narrative.[57]

While ordinary Kashmiris may have been unable to offer resistance to the Mughals, the indigenous mystics of Kashmir, the Rishis, were presented in stories as having stood firm against Mughal encroachments. According to a popular tradition, the reason the Mughal armies had to retreat three times in the face of Chak resistance was due to the prayers of the Rishis.[58] Another story, also found in textual narratives, narrated an encounter between Emperor Aurangzeb and Rishi Pir Pandit.[59] Aurangzeb, on hearing about the tales of piety associated with Rishi Pir, and that the title of Padshah (emperor) had been conferred upon him by the people, ordered the Rishi to make an appearance at his court in India. The Rishi made the journey to Delhi one night and appeared to the emperor in the terrible form of a fierce lion as he lay asleep. This led Aurangzeb to recognize his power and allow him to retain the title of Padshah.[60]

The elaborate record of the indignities Kashmiris suffered under Afghan and Sikh rule that were (and are) preserved in oral tradition, however, makes the Mughal period appear positively enlightened by

comparison. The tyrannies of the Afghan governors, including the levy of exorbitant taxes, indiscriminate drowning of Pandits and the Shia, and the rape of their daughters, had a large repertoire of stories devoted to them. According to one story, an old woman named Koshib was the agent of the libertine Afghan governor Atta Muhammad Khan, who had put her in charge of acquiring beautiful Pandit girls for him. When Pandit parents saw her approaching their homes, they mutilated their daughters' faces by cutting off their noses and shaving their heads rather than allowing them to be dishonored. Another tradition narrated that any Muslim who met a Pandit in those days would jump on his back for a ride, while saying, 'Buta chuk ta khos dita' (You are a Pandit and I will mount you). A couplet that was recited about the activities of an Afghan functionary captures the level of apprehension inspired by Afghan rule: 'O heart there is all fear and dread in this city / Prepare for the journey; disorder (*fitna*) is dominant (*muqim*) in this city.'[61] Similar stories and verses of the cruelties of Sikh governors towards Muslims were told about the Sikh period.[62]

Further, the Kashmiri historical imagination in the nineteenth century was replete with tales of death and destruction caused by natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, epidemics and fires, as well as famines created by the ruthless policies of the Afghan and Sikh governors of the realm. A sense that natural and man-made calamities were linked runs through these stories, as it does in their descriptions in textual historical narratives. In other words, a bad ruler or governor brought on unusually heavy rains, leading to floods, or unseasonably heavy snows, both causing a destruction of property and crops, and eventually leading to famine. The famine most well remembered by Kashmiris in the late nineteenth century occurred in 1831 during the governorship of Sher Singh (Ranjit Singh's son).[63] According to tradition, his ineffectuality as a governor brought on an early autumn snow that destroyed the harvest, and led to widespread devastation and a mass exodus of Kashmiris into the Punjab.[64] In another story, Jabbar Khan, an Afghan governor, heard that Kashmiri Pandits commonly believed that snow fell invariably on the festival of Shiv Ratri, which usually takes place

sometime in February or March. As a result, he ordered that the festival be celebrated in Har (June–July) instead. The festival was thus moved, and even on that summer night, a heavy snow fell, which led the bards to mock the governor and sing: ‘Look at Jabbar, the wretch! / Even Har he turned into winter.’[65]

These stories of natural calamities and other disasters that interconnected the political and physical pasts of Kashmir were the main subject of the verses recited by ladishah as they travelled through cities and the countryside. This will be discussed at length later, but suffice it to say here that the figure of the downtrodden Kashmiri, reduced to a wretched state and at the mercy of both the rapacious state functionaries and natural elements, had emerged as a powerful trope within oral (and some textual) narratives by this period.

As illustrated in the foregoing discussion, the Kashmiri popular understanding of the past was both historical and commemorative. It reflected similar concerns as Persian historical narratives, especially about the origins of the land and the people that lay beyond temporality, and relationships between spiritual and political authority as well as the state and people, that could be located in historical time. The interdependence of textual and oral culture is further evident from the fact that both traditions were characterized by a narration of the past through a repertoire of stories about places, individuals, and events that connected the physical and political landscapes of Kashmir. The resultant narrative produced a coherent sense of place by defining the region as sacred space that had retained its individuality despite the vagaries of political fortune, which had subjected it to a succession of internal and external rulers. Village headmen, itinerant mystics, travel guides, and professional reciters and performers were responsible for the transmission and retellings of these stories within the Kashmiri narrative public as they helped Kashmiris make sense of their past in the light of their contemporary situation and everyday life and vice versa.

When James Hinton Knowles, a missionary in Kashmir, set about collecting what he termed ‘folk tales’, the stories were narrated to him by individuals from a cross-section of society—‘the officiating

governor, the poor farmer, the learned Pandit, the ignorant Musalman, the physician, the barber, the day-labourer, the old man grey headed, and the dirty little boy'.[66] The stories, as we have seen, were an admixture of legends, myths, and facts that did not always fit into a linear narrative; rather, they were adaptive tales that could be applied to a variety of contexts. Usually the stories related to the distant past were imbued with more supernatural characters and magic than those describing more recent events. However, in all the stories of Kashmir's past told in textual and oral narratives, human agency appeared as part of a much larger divine plan.

Storytelling and Performance in the Kashmiri Narrative Public

Some scholars argue that history is always a performance of the past, through written words, or visual images, or dance, or a theatrical piece.[67] For Muhammad Ismail Mir, dastaan goh, who is tied to a long-established Kashmiri tradition of storytelling and recitation, it is also a spiritual practice, a gift bequeathed to him by God himself through the intercession of a holy man. For him, each performance of a *dastaan* (epic story) is the fulfilment of a higher purpose—much like the Prophet Muhammad's recitation of the word of God—even as the dastaans he narrates reflect the enactment of the past on a great divine canvas. Presenting themselves as engaging in a spiritual practice in this way endowed, and continues to endow, storytellers with divine protection, cemented through links with particular Sufi pirs and khanqahs. This also explains, in part, how despite belonging to socially marginalized groups, performers of various kinds retained their position as purveyors of historical memory, and sometimes even politically subversive messages, in Kashmir.

This and the next section examine the storytelling and oral performance tradition in Kashmir from the perspective of its practitioners, primarily dastaan goh and ladishah, while attempting to trace its sources, and place it in the broader context of Kashmiri society that included a vibrant print and publications market in the

Kashmiri language. This allows for its understanding as a commonplace social, spiritual, and economic phenomenon, or borrowing Novetzke's term, as a 'market of performance'. In this marketplace, cultural, social, and economic capital was 'accumulated and spent' through the 'traveling circuit of performers', who in the case of Kashmir, formed the 'human archive' of its past.[68]

Since storytellers and wandering minstrels operated in the popular, oral realm, it is difficult to locate textual sources on them. Nevertheless, from the brief appearances they make in colonial writings, and their continued presence within Kashmiri society, it is apparent that Kashmir boasted a variety of such performers. Of these, dastaan goh, ladishah, and *bhaggat*s or bhands (folk singers and actors), were the most visible, with some overlap among the categories. While storytellers and minstrels performed largely individually and travelled shorter distances in cities and Kashmir's countryside, bhands operated in large family and kin groups whose peregrinations covered a much larger area as they put up more complex theatrical performances for audiences in Kashmir, as well Kashmiri audiences in the Punjab. These professionals often hailed from a particular area, where they practiced cultivation and other associated occupations, and many were landless labourers. While the performers were almost always male, the audiences consisted of men, women, and children, since many of the performances were in people's homes or shrines. Most performers were Muslims, although a significant group of theatrical performers, from the village of Akhingam, were Pandits.[69]

The story the Akhingam Pandits narrated that explained the reason for their clan's entry into the bhand profession—much like Muhammad Ismail Mir's story of his reason for reciting tales—endowed their participation in the profession with divine sanction. According to the story, a *Devi* (goddess) appeared to an ancestor of the family several generations ago and asked him to play the fiddle. Just as Mir protested his inability to recite tales to the fakir who appeared in his dream, the ancestor of the Akhingam Pandits said the same to the Devi, and much like the fakir, the Devi too insisted that he try, and on playing the fiddle, the ancestor produced unearthly music. The story does not end there, however, as it relates

that the Devi ordered the Pandit to sit under the trees of the village and play the fiddle in her honour, an order that he and his sons followed for some years. But since his family was shunned by other Pandits (performance being considered degrading by the caste), he stopped performing and was immediately struck blind. In a state of blindness, he wandered to the Liddar Valley, where the goddess reappeared to him, brought him back to Akhingam and restored his sight; at this point he began performing again. Since then, the family committed itself to the profession.[70] Here again, the theme of divine origins emerges as a powerful trope to bind the storytelling tradition to the land of which it was a part, and endow it with legitimacy to disseminate stories about its own past as well as the past of the land.

Much like the content of the performances, the sites on which they were carried out were both secular and sacred, such as festive village gatherings during weddings or harvest time, and shrines and temples, as well as fairs associated with these sacred sites such as the birth anniversaries of various Sufi saints and Rishis. While these performances were seasonal, usually during late autumn, spring or summer months, storytelling in particular continued during the winter months in people's homes. In fact, as Mir pointed out, it was during winter, when the snow made people home bound, that dastaan goh were invited by families to perform their stories in return for a bowl of rice or a couple roosters, and food and shelter. These gatherings went on for several days and nights as people stayed awake to clean the snow off their roofs to ensure that they did not fall in under its weight. As people wove shawls and *pheran*s on simple wooden looms, the storyteller recounted his tales, usually to the music of a *tumbakhnari* (earthen pot) that he himself played.[71] Storytelling, thus, was firmly entrenched in the routine practices of life, such a harvesting, weaving, and worshipping, and was an integral part of earning a livelihood for both the performers and their audiences. Performers drew their patronage not from the state, but from ordinary people and shrines.

Colonial writings on storytellers and other professional reciters lauded the extraordinary memory of these individuals, which allowed them to recite folk tales and songs in their pristine form that could

then be recorded for linguistic investigations into the authentic Kashmiri language. As George Grierson remarked on this memorial tradition:

> In Kashmir there have been for centuries, and still are, schools of professional reciters, in which each individual has received by tradition the words of folk-tales, folk-songs, or the like, and recites them when called upon to do so.… Each reciter has his own text recorded in his memory exactly as he received it from his teacher-predecessor, and never dreams of altering it, even when he does not understand it.[72]

In describing storytelling and recitation in this static fashion, Grierson and other linguists discounted the performance aspect of these traditions, which allowed them to change form, and even content, as they interacted with audiences and the specific and broader contexts in which they were performed. Each performance drew on written and other oral narratives, such as the verses of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, or songs and ideas prevalent in popular culture. Invoking the names of famous spiritual or historical figures endowed the story being narrated with legitimacy, and the performance itself with authenticity for its audience.

Indeed, interactivity with the audience formed the very essence of storytelling and folk theatre, since performers employed mimicry and caricature to entertain people while providing snapshots into particular periods of Kashmir's past, such as Afghan rule, and/or satirizing contemporary society. So vivid were their portrayals of rural Kashmiri life that Walter Lawrence claimed to have learned about village administration, especially the methods of the *patwari*, or village accountant, from watching these performances.[73] And it was precisely their orality that allowed these performance genres to be open-ended, unstaged, and labile.[74] This also explains the circulation of multiple versions of a single tale in the 'market of performance'.

Mir pointed out, for instance, that the telling of a story was like going on a journey, alluding to the Sufi spiritual journey; each time the journey towards the end of the same story was undertaken, its nature would be different even though the outcome was the same. He noted that he shortened or lengthened his stories depending on

audience feedback. If he felt that the audience interest was flagging, and along with it the intake of remuneration during a recitation, he dramatized the story itself or a particular character within it and paused before the resolution of a critical or suspenseful moment, known as *gond* (knot) in Kashmiri, informing the audience that the story had ended. Having thus drawn the audience back in, he continued the story only after being implored by the audience to do so and being adequately compensated for revealing the rest of the story.[75] Since Mir does not tell new tales and his audience is most likely to be familiar with their endings, what makes the stories come alive again in new form is precisely the particular moment of their performance.

Besides storytellers, who worked on invitation only, oral traditions circulated in the Kashmiri narrative public through the songs performed by the wandering minstrels called ladishah (lit. weaver). These individuals showed up unbidden to people's homes in villages and cities to sing humorous and bitingly satirical poetry (also called ladishah) on social and political issues, as well as on natural and man-made calamities in return for rice or money. The songs sung by ladishah wove together verses of common usage, proverbs, and Kashmiri poetry, to create a sense of the coexistence of the past and the present. Kashmiri scholars have called ladishah the 'people's historian', because he placed people's everyday lives in the context of larger historical events and transformations. The topics of ladishah included famines, *begar* (bonded labour), epidemics, fires, floods, invasions, political conflagrations, and the exploitation of the people by bureaucrats and feudal lords, among others. The ladishah's rendition of these events allowed people to laugh at their historical and contemporary misfortunes and miseries.[76]

When a ladishah entered someone's home with the words, '*Asalaam walekum*, the ladishah has come / Blessings to you, he has entered your home', men, women and children gathered around, tea began to bubble, and fresh water was added to hookahs, as people prepared to take pleasure in the songs.[77] Usually, ladishah rendered a tragic event humorous while also informing people of an important aspect of the past of their land. This is evident from the following verses taken from the ladishah

entitled *Draag* (famine), which describes the famine of 1831 that took place during the governorship of Sher Singh:

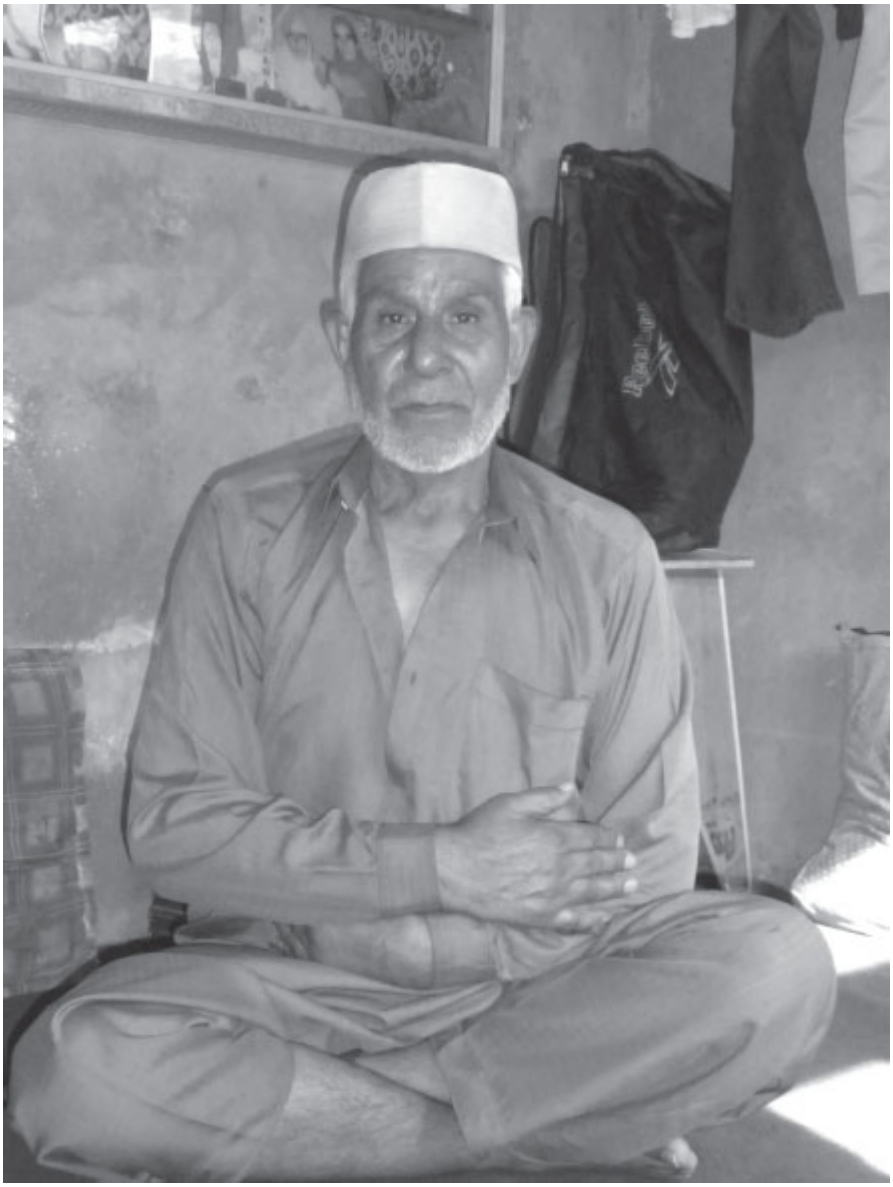

Figure 5.1 Muhammad Ismail Mir, Dastaan Goh. Photo by Chitralekha Zutshi.

The harvest was yet to be collected and it snowed
There was nothing left of the harvest in the fields
The harvest became one with the earth
God had written this on our foreheads [it was pre-destined]
What happened to Mulk-i-Kashmir [homeland of Kashmir]?

Sher Singh came as a harbinger of famine

People starved from morning to night
Famine clutched cities and villages
Rich and poor cried tears of blood
What happened to Mulk-i-Kashmir?

Rahman Kone [one-eyed] went to his in-laws for a feast
He was served unrefined flour mixed with tea
He got diarrhea and his mother-in-law knew
She kept an old pot near his bedside
What happened to Mulk-i-Kashmir?

There is a village near Hangalpur
Faf Ded lost her newborn at delivery
Lass Kon [one-eyed] cooked the babe in a pot
Ish and Fiz [two women] swallowed it quickly
What happened to Mulk-i-Kashmir?

The Ladi had told you about the famine of yesteryear
Be humble, O People!
Understand God's signs
Bring the Ladi food and goods in a bag
What happened to Mulk-i-Kashmir?[78]

The most significant aspect of this ladishah is its rendition of the impact of the famine on the lives of ordinary Kashmiris, who are presented as pitiful, wretched creatures. They are always named in the songs, thus allowing the audience to identify with them and the event with their own lives to create a sense of community through a feeling of intense common suffering. This was not the sole preserve of oral tradition, however, as many of these stories regarding the impact of famine, floods and epidemics in Kashmir, particularly about poor Kashmiris being driven by hunger to consume babes cooked in pots, are also related in Persian textual narratives.[79]

Another ladishah relates a more recent event—the shortage of salt caused by the Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir between 1947 and 1949. Entitled *Noon Draag* (Famine of Salt), it not only explains the causes of the shortage of rock salt (the supply of which was cut off when Pakistan took control of certain parts of Kashmir), but also captures the hardships suffered by Kashmiris as a result:

God, listen to our cries and deliver us to the other side
How many good people were wasted [died] for salt?
Salt became expensive and then disappeared
What, pray, is the point of eating?
Without salt, food is tasteless
How many good people were wasted for salt?

When Pakistan used their force and power
Salt disappeared quickly in Kashmir
It was as though it was swallowed by fire
How many good people were wasted for salt?

They asked for salt to be brought into Kashmir
The Sarpanch Committee took charge of its sale
They made piles of money off this trade
How many good people were wasted for salt?

They asked for an airplane loaded with salt
It was kept at the airport
Leaders and officials made away with the salt and chased us away
How many good people were wasted for salt?

In Warmul [Baramulla] there was a salt seller
He hoarded salt and wasted all the money he made on it
On constructing a beautiful bungalow
How many good people were wasted for salt?[80]

Many people I spoke to in Kashmir about this incident seemed to have a memory of it, and when asked whether they had actually experienced the event or read about it, I was told that they had heard about it from a ladishah.[81] In fact, ladishah seemed to play a significant role in Kashmiri society's memory of past calamities, their impact on people and the landscape, and the role played by officials in exacerbating people's privation through profiteering and peculation.

Thus, storytellers, singers, and other performers formed a vital bridge between the textual historical repertoire and the people. Functioning as part historians, part satirists, part journalists, part entertainers, and part mystics, they were critical to the maintenance of a system of shared public historical memory in Kashmir. This

shared complex of historical memory included knowledge drawn from songs, adages, and poetry and prose texts in multiple languages in oral, manuscript, and printed form and functioned in a realm independent of state control. It relied on a common fund of stories to produce the idea of Kashmir as a divine landscape, even when it was being ravaged by natural and man-made catastrophes. The notion that the (his)story being told was part of God's larger plan and the storyteller the divine mouthpiece is evident in the many stories connected to the reasons for individuals or families adopting the profession. Mir repeatedly pointed out that for him, the act of relating stories was a spiritual one, and the power to remember and recount hundreds of stories was bequeathed to every storyteller by God through his spiritual guide (Sufi pir). According to him, without also being the disciple of a Sufi order, he, an illiterate man, would not have been a storyteller by profession.[82] This reminds us of the importance of Sufism and its shrines in the production, circulation, and legitimization of oral and textual narratives of Kashmir's past.

As a result, the arrival of a dastaan goh or ladishah at one's doorstep was (and is) taken as a sign of heavenly blessing. The pervasiveness of the power of the divine is also illustrated in the stories/songs themselves, which invariably end with godly intervention to restore order and bounty to the landscape, and are replete with warnings to the audience to repent and learn a lesson, as in this ladishah verse from *Bunyulnama* (Story of the Earthquake): 'God is all-powerful and almighty / Disobedience has destroyed us / It is because of it that we face destruction / Tuesday's earthquake went in four directions'.[83] Further, the power of the stories and songs lay in the fact that their content and performance was inextricably linked to the rhythms of the everyday lives of ordinary people. Thus ordinary people could and did participate in the Kashmiri narrative public even though they could not read textual narratives themselves.

Language, Poetry, and Print

Storytelling, theatre, and recitations by minstrels were performed in the Kashmiri language, which in part explains its continued vibrancy

despite lack of state patronage.[84] Indeed, Kashmiri transformed the Kashmiri narrative public into a shared space in which textual, oral, elite, and popular practices and ideas about the past circulated and were consumed by a wide cross-section of society. As we have seen, vernacular Kashmiri verse came into its own in the nineteenth century and drew on a variety of folk, classical, historical, hagiographical, mystical, and epic sources. Poets such as Mahmud Gami, Maqbool Shah Kraalwari, Azizullah Hakkani, Walliullah Mattu, and Wahab Pare rendered classical Persian tales and historical texts into Kashmiri while also composing original satirical, historical, mystical, and love poems.[85]

With the decline of the Persian narrative tradition and the increasing interfertilization between Persian and Kashmiri by the early twentieth century, individuals from a variety of social classes, including *pir-hakim*s and shopkeepers, began composing their own Kashmiri adaptations of Persian tales and Sufi tracts, as well as protest poetry against the Dogra state. Atiqullah 'Atiq' Dyalgami, a pir from Anantnag district in southern Kashmir, for instance, wrote a Kashmiri verse adaptation of Jami's famous Persian love poem *Yusuf-Zuleikha*, entitled *Gulzar-i Yusuf*, in the 1920s.[86] Similarly, Lassa Khan 'Fida', the owner of a chemist shop, also from Anantnag, adapted the Persian text from Bengal, *Mazhab-i Ishq*, into Kashmiri verse with the title *Gul-i Bakawali* in the 1930s.[87]

These Kashmiri poems were widely disseminated within Kashmiri society; until the late nineteenth century they circulated largely in manuscript form,[88] and by the late nineteenth century, they were increasingly available as printed pamphlets published by presses in Lucknow and Lahore. The role played by Ghulam Muhammad Noor Muhammad Booksellers (GMNM) of Maharaj Gunj, Srinagar, in shaping the print and publications market in Kashmiri at the turn of the twentieth century is worth discussing in some detail here. The bookselling business that later came to be called GMNM began as a small bookshop in late-nineteenth-century Srinagar, in the locality of Chattabal. Its owner, Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim, had migrated to Kashmir from Lahore, and mainly sold Urdu and Persian religious literature printed in Lahore in his shop. His son, Sheikh Abdul Gaffar,

relocated the shop—naming it after his two sons, Ghulam and Noor Muhammad—to Maharaj Gunj, which had emerged as a thriving centre of trading activities in Srinagar by the early twentieth century. Sheikh Gaffar began the tradition of collecting Kashmiri vernacular manuscripts, primarily Sufi tracts, and Nund Rishi's and Lal Ded's verses, which he then commissioned for printing at Rafiq-i Am Press, Lahore and Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.[89]

By the 1920s, GMNM was flourishing as it expanded into publishing an assortment of Kashmiri narratives,[90] including such texts as *Gulzar-i Yusuf* and *Gul-i Bakawali*, mentioned earlier, as well as a few works in Persian and Urdu. These publications took the form of short eight- to sixteen-page pamphlets, usually priced at 2 annas to 4 paise. Many pamphlets that were Kashmiri adaptations of Persian texts included both the Kashmiri verses placed in the centre with the original Persian printed in the margins.[91] Authorship, even in the context of print culture, and the Indological obsession with authentic texts and sole authorship, which was taking place concurrently as we have seen in the last chapter, remained layered and segmented, especially when one adds performance to this repertoire. Indeed, the title pages of these pamphlets alternatively record the titles of the original texts or the adapted titles, with no mention of the author, or simply a mention of the author of the adapted version. In some cases, they mention the title of the Kashmiri adaptation and note the name of the scribe, without any mention of the author. This is not to suggest that authorship was unimportant, but rather that printed texts, and the oral culture of which they were a part, were recognized as part of a longer and more composite narrative tradition to which a number of individuals, including writers, scribes, storytellers, and reciters, had contributed through the centuries.[92]

Figure 5.2 Title page of *Qissa-i Shah Mandud Barzabane Kashmiri*, by Moulvi Ali Baba, scribe Muhammad Afzal Maqdoomi; published at the request of Ghulam Muhammad Noor Muhammad Booksellers at Rafiq-i Am Press, Lahore, 1929.

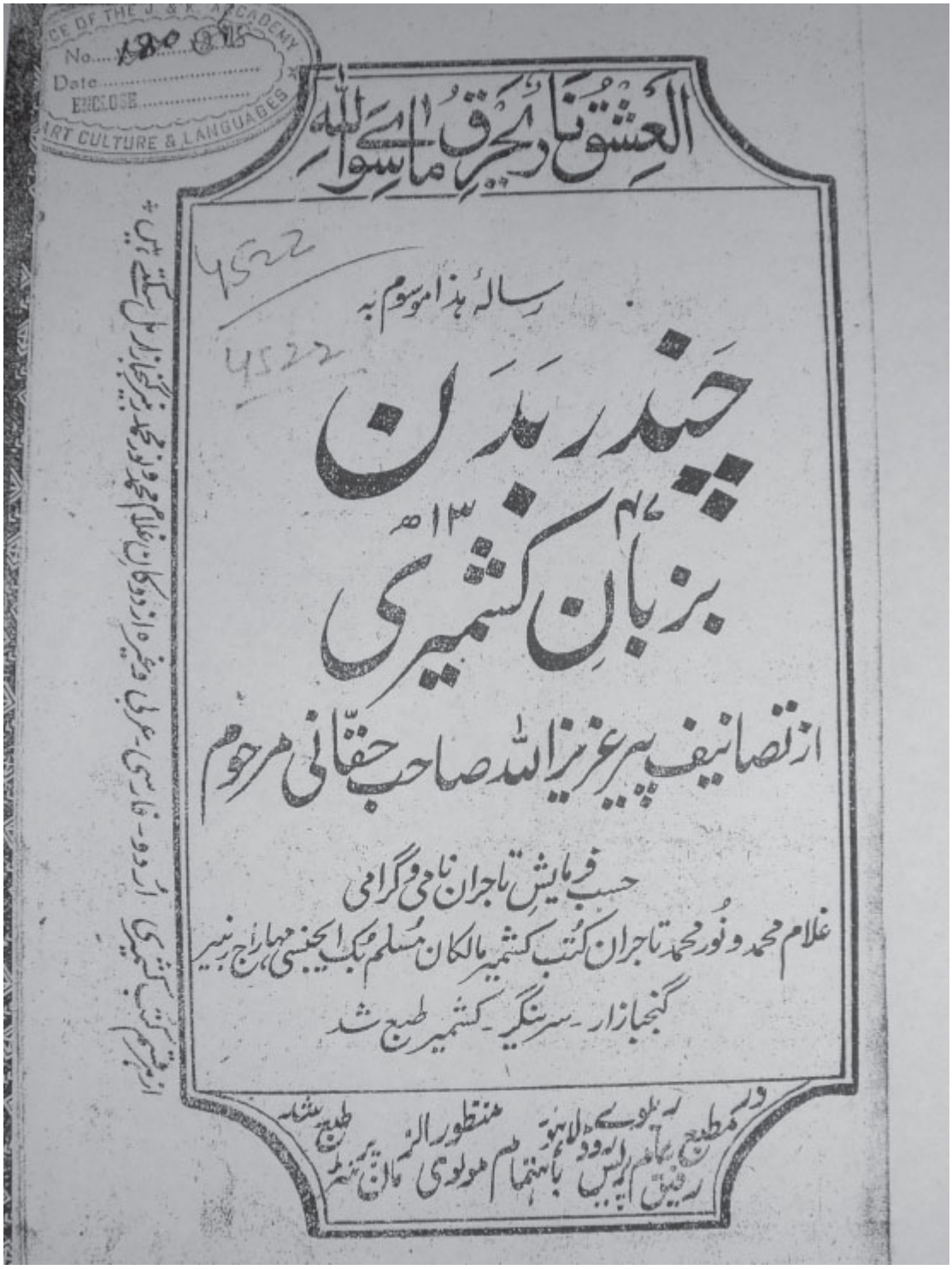

Figure 5.3 Title page of *Chandrabadan Barzabane Kashmiri*, by Azizullah Hakkani; published at the request of Ghulam Muhammad Noor Muhammad Booksellers at Railway Press, Lahore, 1928.

The printing of Kashmiri narratives at presses in Lahore and Lucknow at the request of GMNM continued unabated as the two sons after whom the shop had been named took over the business in the mid-1930s. Both Ghulam and Noor Muhammad were keen to expand into publishing within Kashmir and contracted with Ranbir Government Press for the publication of pamphlets and some longer texts. Not only did they themselves commission the translation of many classical Persian texts into Kashmiri verse as well as the composition of Kashmiri narratives, they also published Persian historical narratives such as Dyadmari's *Waqiat-i Kashmir* (1936).[93] The bookshop itself became a gathering place where individuals spontaneously composed poetry, which was then copied by the team of scribes that was permanently attached to the shop, and was eventually printed. The credit for standardizing the Kashmiri script in Perso-Arabic letters thus also goes to GMNM.[94]

It is no surprise that GMNM is referred to as the Newal Kishore of Kashmir.[95] Much like Newal Kishore Press in Lucknow,[96] GMNM was not merely a commercial enterprise, but it was also specifically interested in and responsible for the dissemination of ideas in the Kashmiri vernacular, partly by maintaining its relationship with the rich Persian narrative tradition. For most of its early-twentieth-century existence, GMNM was a mobile book business that depended on hawkers on foot or bicycles to peddle its pamphlets and books across the length and breadth of Kashmir.[97] Those who remember the bookseller from its heyday in the 1940s, state that the two brothers themselves went door to door promoting and selling their books.[98] The Maharaj Gunj bookshop stocked daily provisions too, as a result of which it attracted a variety of customers, many of whom joined the poetry recitations at the shop, sometimes even leaving with a book or two for their own perusal.[99] Perhaps the most brisk business for books was conducted at the numerous book stalls during fairs, festivals, and Friday prayers at Hazratbal mosque, Srinagar, and other shrines in the cities and rural areas of Kashmir. These roadside bookstalls became the centres of spontaneous assemblies around simmering cauldrons of salty Kashmiri tea in which books were read out loud, stories related, and the unlettered,

including storytellers, became familiar with the content of textual narratives.[100]

Although small, the Kashmiri print and publications market was significant in shaping the Kashmiri narrative public in the early twentieth century. Booksellers such as GMNM were part of a new market economy that was emerging in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Kashmir that still maintained crucial links with the old bazaar economy. The print market thus became the arena for the establishment of critical connections between languages, genres, and textual narratives, and their performance in the popular realm. Indeed, it was the printing of Kashmiri translations, adaptations, and original compositions that allowed for the interfertilization of ideas between textual and oral narratives, and their more widespread dissemination, thus making storytelling and performance an ever more vibrant part of the Kashmiri public sphere. The importance of the Kashmiri language in this regard cannot be overstated; in fact, despite the almost complete lack of state patronage and after the replacement of Persian with Urdu in official circles, Kashmiri poetry flourished and filled the vacuum left behind by the decline of Persian. It also, significantly, drew a bridge between the two languages, as well as among the manuscript, print, and oral worlds of the Kashmiri narrative public.

There were several aspects of Kashmiri poetry that made it particularly conducive to oral performance. First, much of it was written in popular Kashmiri verse forms, such as *vakhun*, in which both love and mystical songs that were sung at weddings and shrines were composed. Further, it liberally drew on characters from popular Kashmiri tales and songs that would be familiar to most Kashmiris. At the same time, Kashmiri poetry invoked a strong sense of place, with its ample imagery of gardens, springs, and forests of Kashmir, as well as by locating itself in specifically named places, such as Pampore, Nishat, Nageen, or the peak of the mountain Harmukh.[101] So even before being rendered into performance, Kashmiri verse itself was shaped by a variety of oral, written, and visual texts. According to Mir, a dastaan came into existence after an incident or event had been rendered into Kashmiri poetry and was then performed by a dastaan goh. The performance

was based on a particular poem even as it drew from other poems, folk knowledge, popular songs, and textual traditions.[102] Storytelling thus incorporated an amalgam of knowledge—textual, visual, performative, oral, and aural—that was transmitted to the audience in which the latter too had an input. Moreover, it incorporated several layers of rendition, across languages, genres, and the literacy-orality divide.

When asked how he had learned the stories he narrated, Mir stated that his father-in-law, a semi-literate man, had taught him some and he had picked up others from listening to them recited at various forums, including at shrine gatherings and in people's homes. In particular, he pointed to the existence of individuals known as *kitab gor* in Kashmiri society, who would go to people's homes, sometimes on invitation and at other times uninvited, to read out loud published and unpublished books and pamphlets, thus forming the bridge between textual narratives and their popular dissemination by storytellers such as Mir. Later, Mir's literate children and grandchildren read printed Kashmiri poetry and songs to him, some of which he chose to perform. A story he wished to perform was one in which the Kashmiri nationalist leader, Sheikh Abdullah, was forced to put his hand in a vat of boiling oil by his detractors; however, his hand emerged unscathed from the vat as Abdullah declared the oil to be cool. Although doing the rounds in the popular sphere in the 1950s and 1960s, the story had not yet been recorded in Kashmiri verse, which made it difficult for Mir to perform it. Among the more popular dastaans that he does perform are mostly nineteenth-century Kashmiri verse stories by Gami, Kraalwari, and Mattu, such as *Himal Nagaray*, *Dastaan-i Mahmud Ghaznavi*, *Bomber Yamberzal*, *Akhnandun* (which has seven versions, each of which Mir has performed) and *Gulrez*.[103]

The trajectory of the story *Himal Nagaray*, and the story itself, is worth examining in some detail here so as to get a sense of the multiple languages, genres, and meanings through which a story travelled, and the circularity of oral, manuscript, and print culture in the Kashmiri narrative public. The story of Himal and her lover Nagaray was part of Kashmir's oral repertoire for centuries. Writing on the history of Kashmir in the early twentieth century, Anand Koul

noted that the story was an account of a real princess—the daughter of one of the thirty-five kings not mentioned in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* that had been resurrected by Pir Hassan Shah in *Tarikh-i Hassan*—and her love for a commoner. According to him, Kashmiris were familiar with the stories of these 'lost kings' long before *Tarikh-i Hassan* gave them historical legitimacy.[104] In his mid-nineteenth-century history, Ghulam Nabi Shah Khanyari identified the ancient Kashmiri ruler, Raja Baldeo, as the father of Himal, who had fallen in love with the commoner Nagaray. He further noted that his source for this information was the story *Himal Nagaray* as told by the peasants of Kashmir.[105]

The story was first textually recorded in Persian verse by Mulla Ashraf Dairi in the early eighteenth century, then by Sadruddin Wafai in 1806, followed by a Persian prose version by Baba Asrar Qadri in 1821. Waliullah Mattu and Saifuddin Tarabali rendered it into Kashmiri masnavis in the 1840s and 1865 respectively.[106] An Urdu translation by Hargopal Kaul Khasta, entitled *Himal Nagarajan*, appeared in the late nineteenth century.[107] The performance of this story by dastaan goh and theatre groups drew on the accumulated multilingual oral, manuscript, and printed forms in which it had been transmitted and in which it continued to circulate in Kashmir. When James Hinton Knowles recorded the story for his book, *Kashmiri Folk Tales*, which was told to him by a Pandit Shiva Ram of Srinagar, he noted its existence in printed form in Persian, Kashmiri, and Urdu.[108] The multiple renditions of the story in the nineteenth century (and earlier) indicate that much like the *qissa Hir Ranjha* in the case of the Punjabi literary formation, as argued by Farina Mir, *Himal Nagaray* too enabled poets and performers to offer 'a form of social commentary' on the times in the light of the past.[109]

The broad contents of the story will reveal its ability to perform this function.[110] Nagaray was a snake (or Naga; also original inhabitants of Kashmir) who had emerged from a spring (*nag*) of pure and sweet water and entered the bag of a poor Brahman while he was resting by the spring. This Brahman had left home because he was tired of his selfish wife's nagging, and as a result, when he opened the bag and saw the snake inside it, he decided to go back

home and present the bag to his wife. When the wife opened the bag, she screamed on seeing the snake, which instantly transformed into a beautiful boy. From henceforth, the Brahman and his wife were reconciled and the family's wealth increased as the child's beauty and sagacity grew day by day. Just past his seventh birthday, Nagaray told his father that he needed to bathe in a clean, pure spring or else he would be defiled. The Brahman informed him that the only such spring existed inside the princess' garden which could be entered on pain of death. On being implored, his father allowed Nagaray to approach the high walls of the garden, which Nagaray entered through a hole by transforming himself into a serpent. Inside, he retransformed into a boy and took a bath in the spring without being noticed.

On his third visit to the spring, however, the princess happened to see him and was mesmerized by the form of the beautiful boy. On seeing him transform himself into a serpent and enter the Brahman's house, she decided that she would marry him since he was of high caste and was beautiful to behold. Her father, the king, told her that he would marry her to any prince she chose, but she insisted on being married to Nagaray, stating that it mattered little if he was rich or poor as long as her heart belonged to him. The king was furious but eventually relented and called Nagaray's father to the palace, asking him for his beautiful son's hand in marriage for his daughter. The Brahman agreed but was dejected at the thought of an expensive wedding for which he had no money. Nagaray told him not to be worried and that all would be taken care of on the appointed day. On the day of the wedding, as the Brahman sat gloomily, Nagaray gave him a piece of paper with a letter on it and asked him to throw the paper into a certain spring and return home. Upon his return, the Brahman encountered a large retinue of soldiers, elephants, horses laden with jewels, gold, and silver that were to accompany the family wedding party to the king's palace. The king too was astonished on seeing a Brahman's son arrive amidst such fanfare and the wedding was conducted to everyone's satisfaction.

Nagaray began to live in the palace with Himal and after some time he built his own palace on the banks of the river at the king's

behest. However, Nagaray had other (Naga) wives, who were jealous at his long absence and hatched various schemes to bring him back. In the guise of sweeper woman pretending to be Nagaray's original wife, one of them convinced Himal to persuade Nagaray to wade into the spring to prove that he himself was not a sweeper. On Himal's insistence, Nagaray stepped into the spring, where his wives were waiting to bind his feet and pull him down into the depths. Having thus lost Nagaray, Himal left the palace and took to performing charitable deeds. Once a poor man came to her door, asking for alms, and told her that he had witnessed the emergence of a noble king from a spring who gave away food in the name of Himal. Himal arrived posthaste at the spring and accosted Nagaray (none other than the noble king) when he emerged from the spring, pleading with him to forgive her and take her along with him if he could not come with her. He eventually relented and took her to his underwater palace.

In the watery depths of the Naga abode, Himal was envied by Nagaray's wives and made to work hard; she was in charge of boiling the milk for the Naga children. Once, due to her carelessness in not cooling the milk before serving it to the children, all the children died from consuming boiling milk. Furious with grief, the wives bit Himal to death. Nagaray was in turn consumed with grief and taking Himal's body out of the spring, he placed it on a tree, and visited it everyday. There it was discovered by a holy man, who, taking pity on the beautiful young woman, prayed to God to restore her life. His wish was granted and Himal went to live in the holy man's house. When Nagaray went to the tree the next day, he was shocked to find Himal's body gone and commenced a search for it. On entering the holy man's house, he was overjoyed to see Himal sleeping there, and changed himself into a serpent while waiting for her on the bed. When the holy man's son saw a serpent lying near Himal, whom he loved and hoped to marry, he cut the serpent into two pieces. Himal woke up and realizing what had happened, lamented the death of her husband. When his body was cremated that night, she lay down beside him and was burned to ashes.

The holy man mourned the death of the two lovers by collecting their ashes and crying before them day and night. Shiva and Parvati

happened to be sitting in the shape of two birds on the tree under which the holy man was lamenting and decided to help him on hearing his cries. Shiva told Parvati that if the ashes were immersed in a particular spring, the two would be restored to life. As soon as the holy man heard this, he threw the ashes into that spring and Himal and Nagaray came alive again, as young and beautiful as ever. They lived happily ever after in a small house not far from the spring with the holy man, whom they took care of until the end of his days.

There are several threads within this story that illustrate its potential to be recast to comment on particular political and social situations. The ability of its characters to transcend social, class, and other barriers despite their own belief in these social norms, and for the lovers to be united at the end against overwhelming odds, is a particularly potent message. In a version of the story performed for me by Mir, Nagaray was a Muslim in love with Himal—who was the daughter of a Hindu Raja—and pretended to be a Brahman to be able to marry her. When his body was to be cremated towards the end, Muslims came to take him away to be buried, but they did not succeed, and he was cremated and then resurrected as in the other version of the tale.[111] The interactions amongst Nagas, Brahmans, and rulers in one version, and Pandits and Muslims in another, indicate that oral traditions, as much as textual historical narratives, adapted to each other and the political context in which they were written and told. As in the story of the gift of the *Nilamata Purana* to the Brahman Chandradev, so often told in nineteenth-century Persian historical narratives and oral traditions, the various retellings of *Himal Nagaray* presented Kashmir as a place made home by successive groups of migrants, whose relationships were under constant negotiation.

Further, the story embodies a profound sense of place—Kashmir as a blessed landscape—as did most stories that circulated in the Kashmiri narrative public, including those adapted from Persian tales. The significance of water, in particular the sacred springs of Kashmir, in giving life and bringing about both separation and reconciliation in the story rehearses the trope of divine origins of the land itself, even as its warns about the possibility of the land's re-

submergence. It is not accidental that Shiva and Parvati bring about the final resurrection of the two lovers through an immersion of their ashes in the divine spring that gives life to all. This idea would have spoken to Hindus for obvious reasons, but equally to Muslims as a result of the stories in tazkiras about the adoption of the springs and their inhabitants into the Islamic fold. This allowed everyone in the audience, regardless of religious affiliation, to participate in divine crossings, along with Himal and Nagaray. The story, thus, held a larger mystical meaning deeply embedded in the Kashmiri geographical universe, alongside providing a concrete example for everyday coexistence in Kashmir from the lives of two semi-historical, semi-legendary figures.[112]

As Mir pointed out, the purpose of storytelling was 'entertainment while providing a forum in which people could participate in the mores, traditions, and customs of societies past'.[113] The performances of the stories did not simply inform people about the past, but did so by emotionally involving them in it,[114] or as Farina Mir puts it in the case of Punjabi qisse, by 'constructing and narrating a historical imagination'.[115] Print and orality thus worked in tandem with each other and included diverse participants—storytellers, booksellers, singers, poets, writers, saints, farmers, weavers, men and women, the elderly, and the young—in the creation of knowledge about Kashmir's past in terms of its present.

The Melancholy City: Performing Kashmir's Past in the Postcolonial Period

The past, as we have seen, was integrated into Kashmiris' common sense and prosaic understanding of the world. This understanding was certainly political, but it did not necessarily directly engage with forms of political power, such as the state, although it did satirize the tyranny of the powerful. While the Kashmiri nationalist movement did not take on a linguistic character in the 1930s and 1940s, Kashmiri—the vernacular—played a significant role in shaping the ideas, debates, and stories that defined the Kashmiri public sphere in this period. Kashmiri poetry, in particular, entered its modernist

phase as poems by Ghulam Ahmed Mahjoor, Abdul Ahad Azad, Zinda Kaul, and Dina Nath Nadim celebrated the Kashmiri nation and its people, some in a socialist vein.[116] And, during the fierce political repression of the immediate postcolonial period, it was Kashmiri poetry, short stories, and plays, and writings about them, now published in a variety of avenues, that sustained the cultural and historical memories of the Kashmiri narrative public.

Eventually, the trauma of partition and misrule in the state of Jammu and Kashmir resulted in an insurgency against the Indian state in the 1990s and this has formed the backdrop for the reassessment of the Kashmiri past as a whole, and the stories that sustain it in the popular imagination. This continuing reengagement, moreover, is overtly political and engages directly with both the regional and central governments, and by extension, draws the contours of Kashmir in terms both indigenous (local, regional) and national.[117] This section explores one such recent reassessment—the writing and performance of the play *Nagar Vodase* (The Melancholy City)—which specifically draws on the past, as historical experience, to highlight the present and future of Kashmir.

The 1950s and 1960s were an uncertain period in Kashmir—on the one hand characterized by the muzzling of political dissent, especially of individuals and organizations voicing anti-Indian ideologies, and on the other, the rise and decline of socialism and the progressive movement in Kashmiri literature, culture, and the arts.[118] Kashmiri poetry by Nadim, Mirza Ghulam Hasan Beg Arif, and Muhammad Amin Kamil, among others, gave voice to the gradually creeping disillusionments of this period. GMNM continued its well-established efforts to print and disseminate literature and other writings in the Kashmiri language. It was in this period, moreover, that the Jammu and Kashmir government actively entered and began to patronize the print and publications market. This is evident in Sheikh Abdullah's efforts towards building the Research and Publications Department that was responsible for collecting and preserving Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts, and sometimes editing and publishing them.

At the same time, the regime encouraged efforts at recording the history of Kashmir, as evident in Abdullah's support of P. N. K. Bamzai's comprehensive history, discussed in Chapter 4. Sheikh Abdullah also deputed the Kashmiri poet, Mahjoor, to write a history of the freedom movement in Kashmir. Dejected at the political repression of the period, however, Mahjoor reportedly stated:

> What history, it has been distorted; you have changed your stance, you have changed your destination, you have become wayward and forgotten the pledges you made to the people. What an irony of fate, the movement of the march has been brought to ignominy, changing the centuries of old traditions, ethos and history of a nation which had a proud past but has now a dismal future.[119]

Complete state control over historical composition, thus, continued to stymie the emergence of history as an academic discipline.

The regime of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, Sheikh Abdullah's successor (Abdullah was deposed in 1953), was particularly repressive of anti-India sentiment. However, it was during his tenure as prime minister that the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture & Languages was founded in 1958 with the express purpose of fostering the composite literature and culture of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Academy combined the functions of an academy of letters, music, dance, drama, and arts through the publication of journals such as *Shiraza* and *Hamara Adab*, in both Urdu and Kashmiri. It also published an annual anthology of writings in the major languages of the state, translations (to and from Kashmiri and Persian), dictionaries, and encyclopaedias, and undertook the preservation of folklore.[120] It is noteworthy that the Academy collected, bound, and preserved the hundreds of pamphlets published by GMNM in the early twentieth century. And, most of the writings in the Academy's journals and many of its other publications drew on the material in these pamphlets, and continue to do so.[121]

Through the politically turbulent times of the 1960s and 1970s, the Academy provided a haven for a new generation of Kashmiri playwrights, artists, and poets, while at the same time conserving and drawing attention to the vernacular historical and literary

traditions of Kashmir.[122] Nonetheless, this was a state-driven enterprise that was aimed intentionally at creating a unified Kashmiri cultural and literary identity—*Kashmiriyat*—which simultaneously celebrated Kashmir's uniqueness while also bringing it in line with Indian nationalist ideals.

Despite the publication of works such as Bamzai's history that set itself apart from Kashmir's historical tradition based on an objective narration of the past, Kashmir's history was still narrated as a series of stories about the land and its people that drew abundantly on its oral and textual traditions. S. L. Sadhu's *Tales from the Rajatarangini*, published in 1967, is a case in point. The book is a more or less chronological narrative of Kashmiri history, told through a series of stories drawn from Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, its Sanskrit continuations, and *Tarikh-i Hassan*. It begins with the familiar story of the emergence of Kashmir from water and its settlement by humans, and ends with the story of the ouster of the Afghans from Kashmir by the Sikhs in 1819 through the efforts of particular Kashmiris. Stories about historical characters, such as the King Lalitaditya, coexist in the book with stories of legendary lovers, such as Bombur and Lolare. Sadhu noted in his preface that he had wanted to title the book, 'Historical Tales from Kashmir', 'but that title appears slightly inappropriate; for … some of the anecdotes and events, especially those pertaining to earlier ages in which the borderline between the actual and mythical has disappeared, do not fully satisfy the requirements of a skeptical age'.[123]

Furthermore, oral forms of narration, such as storytelling, continued unabated through this period in a domain free of the state, especially since they did not conform overtly to particular political ideologies. Gulshan Majeed, who was a teenager in the early 60s, recalls that the caretakers and pirs from Nund Rishi's shrine at Chrar Sharif would visit individual homes in his hometown in Anantnag district every autumn. The children would eagerly await their arrival in late September as the rice harvest was being taken in, because they brought with them dried pears from the gardens of Chrar Sharif to distribute amongst the children and told fantastic stories about Nund Rishi's life. The women of the household would give these individuals rice, lentils, and spices, and listen to their tales alongside

the children. These stories were then repeated by the elderly women of the household throughout the year, especially during winters, when children would gather around a blanket on frigid evenings.[124] Ladishah too visited people's homes, reciting bitingly satirical poetry about the political conditions of the time. A popular ladishah poked fun at Sheikh Abdullah for being deposed by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad: 'Thadis Na Akl Aes / Thsotis Kya Gav / Warni Hind Nachiv Duniya Khyo' (If the tall one—Sheikh Abdullah—didn't have sense / What happened to the short one—Afzal Beg—his deputy? / Meanwhile the midwife's son—Bakshi—stole the entire world!).[125]

The professional career of Moti Lal Kemmu (b. 1933), the author of the Kashmiri play *Nagar Vodase*, reflects the continuing engagement between textual forms of narration and oral performance, as well as between history and literature within the Kashmiri narrative public in the postcolonial period. Indeed, these engagements have allowed the narrative public to be the only space in Kashmir within which debates regarding the relationship between region and nation, and Kashmiris and the state (both Kashmiri and Indian), can be carried out almost unfettered. Kemmu has a long history of involvement in the Kashmiri bhand pether tradition, which began when he joined the Cultural Academy in the 1960s.[126] Originally a producer and director of bhand shows, Kemmu began writing plays in Kashmiri in this period when he realized the dearth of the existence of Kashmiri language scripts that could be performed on stage.[127]

What makes his plays unique, moreover, is that they are written in an idiom inspired by bhand pether, and thus display a style that masterfully blends content with theatrical elements of performance. It is significant that what drew him to the bhand tradition was its ability to sketch a rich repertoire of quintessentially 'Kashmiri' social and political characters, incidents, and events that were used to highlight the absurdities of the contemporary political situation or social relationships in Kashmir.[128] Indeed, Kashmiri life, Kashmir's people, and its history had been a central component of bhand performances for centuries. Most performances began, for instance,

with the verses: ‘Blessings on the Mulk and its people / Blessings on Mother Kashmir / May agriculture flourish / May we be safe from famine and disease / Protect us from fire and death.’[129] Kemmu spent the early part of his career bringing together and reviving scattered bhand groups in Kashmir, which in turn, as mentioned earlier, had a profound impact on the content of his more formal plays. One of the stories performed by three different bhand groups under Kemmu’s direction was, not insignificantly, *Himal Nagaray*, in Srinagar in 1956.[130]

Early on, Kemmu’s plays took on the corruption and depravity of modern Kashmiri political and social life, in particular with reference to the actions of politicians and social mores towards Kashmiri women, as well as historical themes. Inspired by bhand performances, many of which were about the extortions of revenue officials (a particular kind of pether called ‘Darz Pether’ is devoted to this theme), Kemmu placed a group of bhands at the centre of his play, *Trunov* (1969). *Trunov* is about the fear that grips the inhabitants of a Kashmiri village on news of the arrival of a new revenue collector.[131] In another play within the same anthology, *Manzily Nikka* (The Cradled Brat), he laid bare the farcical nature of democracy in Kashmir in the 1950s and 1960s. The third play in the anthology launched a strident critique of the position of Kashmiri women, invoking the mistreatment of the fourteenth-century mystic, Lal Ded, by her in-laws, in describing the drudgery of the life of the eponymous title character, Lalla, in her in-laws’ home.[132]

It was in the same period that Kemmu began experimenting with historical plays that reflected on the contemporary situation through well-known events and characters from Kashmir’s past. For inspiration, he turned to Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini*, which although wrested from the indigenous textual tradition, continued to circulate in the oral realm, in translation, and in books such as Sadhu’s *Tales from the Rajatarangini*, discussed earlier. As Kemmu noted, his mother narrated stories from *Rajatarangini* to him as a child, which ‘kept him connected to the smell and taste of the earth of his own land’.[133] In addition, an Urdu translation of the text was kept in their home, which he had read as a young man.

His first play in this genre was *Tshay* (Shadow), written between 1965 and 1966 and published and performed in Jammu, Srinagar, and Delhi in 1972. *Tshay* was based on one *shloka* of *Rajatarangini* which relates the death of the eighth-century Kashmiri monarch, Lalitaditya. He is described in *Rajatarangini* and remembered in the popular Kashmiri imagination as a powerful monarch who conquered vast territories, but who died in a snowstorm as his mighty army collapsed in the face of nature's wrath. Lalitaditya himself does not make an appearance in the play, merely casting a long shadow on the unfolding events as they make a trenchant comment on the ephemeral nature of power.[134] Further, the play honed in on a moment of a crisis of faith and erosion of political values in Kashmir's past that embodied its contemporary situation. Kemmu's plays continued to critique Kashmir's political class through the 1970s and 1980s, partly by poignantly depicting the decline of the bhand tradition itself in the post-independence era of 'people's rule'.[135]

Kemmu's writing took a new turn with the outbreak of the insurgency in the 1990s that rent asunder Kashmiri society and uprooted what he saw as its essential ethos that had allowed different religious groups to coexist within its boundaries. The forced emigration of Pandits from Kashmir as a result of the increasingly *jihadist* turn of one portion of the insurgency profoundly influenced the themes he elaborated on in his plays. Interestingly, Kemmu linked the emergence of religious divisions in Kashmiri society with the continued decline of its theatrical and storytelling traditions. He thus implied that their circulation had been critical to the maintenance of the Kashmiri philosophy of harmonious coexistence of multiple cultural and religious traditions. He thus boldly suggested in one of his plays—*Dakh Yeli Tsalan* (When Supports Crumble, 1998)—that the challenge to the increasingly divisive nature of Kashmiri political discourse would also come from within its storytelling and performance traditions, which although in battered shape in the postcolonial period and during the insurgency, continued to embody the best humanist values of the land.[136]

Along with *Dakh Yeli Tsalan*, Kemmu wrote another play in this period entitled *Shah Pether* (The King's Drama), in bhand pether

form, that drew on one of the most well-remembered stories within Kashmir's textual and oral traditions. Retelling it yet again, this time in the context of the plight of dispossessed Kashmiri Pandits, the pether described Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's dilemma when faced with the results of his father's (Sultan Sikandar's) persecution of Pandits, which had led many of them to emigrate from Kashmir. With a pun on the word *shah*, which means both king and breath in Kashmiri, the play related the story of the Sultan's near fatal illness and his cure by a Pandit who asked for little as recompense other than the return and rehabilitation of Pandits to their homeland.[137] The play should not, however, be read simply as a one-sided Pandit missive, but rather as a plea for the restoration of Kashmir to a period of prosperity and vibrancy as witnessed under Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's rule, who took steps to patronize all communities within the realm. Further, the focus of the pether on a specific contemporary issue told in the light of a well-known past event reveals its flexibility and explains the durability of this form and its purpose within the Kashmiri narrative public.

Continuing to draw inspiration from the past, Kemmu turned once again to *Rajatarangini* for his next and longest play, *Nagar Vodase*, which he had begun, he told me, in the 1960s, but wrote the bulk of it between 1995 and 1996. The impetus to complete the play came with the burning of Nund Rishi's shrine at Chrar Sharif, a symbol of amity between various communities in Kashmir through the greatest embodiment of the indigenous mystical tradition. As he witnessed the near anarchical political conditions that led to a mass exodus of Kashmiris from their homeland, he was struck by its similarity with eleventh-century Kashmir, when the ruler and people alike were victims of anxiety, uncertainty, and turbulence in social and political life. According to Kemmu, the play was born of a moment of cultural and political crisis for him as he reflected on his experiences as a Kashmiri in the postcolonial period in the light of historical events related in *Rajatarangini*.[138]

The play is based on the seventh canto of *Rajatarangini*, which tells the story of Anantdev, the just king of Kashmir, who abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Kalashdev, on the entreaties of his wife, Queen Suryamati. While based on this episode, the play takes

some narrative licenses for dramatic effect. In the play, Kalashdev is as an unworthy prince who had sought the throne actively before his father's abdication, and once in power, continued his machinations against his father. Misrule deepened during his reign as, surrounded by sycophants, he indulged in depraved and licentious acts that oppressed the people and disgraced the royal family. Disgusted by his son's conduct, Anantdev retreated to the holy site of Vijeyshwara (Bijbehara), with a large retinue of his loyal followers, courtiers, and relatives. Kalashdev marched on his father with an army in the hope of eliminating him, but Anantdev was able to gain victory. At this point, Anantdev decided that he would declare his grandson, Harshdev, as the rightful ruler, but on hearing of this Kalashdev hatched another plan to eliminate them by setting the town of Vijeyshwara on fire. The old couple escaped, and Suryamati discovered that Kalashdev was not of royal lineage, but rather a maid's son (this is not in *Rajatarangini*). Kalashdev banished his father to Poonch, but rather than suffer this humiliation, Anantdev committed suicide. Suryamati declared that the king had died of natural causes and self-immolated on his funeral pyre.[139]

An interesting aspect of the play is its chorus of Brahman elders, which acts as the narrator and storyteller, and 'stands in for the Kashmiri people', in Kemmu's words. According to him, the chorus gave collective voice to the people of Kashmir in the fifty years since independence (since the play was written between 1995 and 1996), and the terrible depredations they had suffered at the hands of their rulers. Although they had no actual power, Kashmiris did voice their opinions on political and social issues through discussions and traditions such as dastaan and bhand pether. While the play may have been about the rulers, the people of the city were critical to its narrative. It was, after all, the people who bore the brunt of the misdeeds of their rulers.[140]

For Kemmu, the play encapsulated not just the conditions in Kashmir since the insurgency, but the entire time period since the partition of Kashmir as a result of the Indo-Pakistan war over the territory between 1947 and 1949. This had produced in the people of Kashmir what he called *rawan tyol*, or a sense of loss, that manifested itself in feelings of deep melancholy, loneliness, and

ultimately led to utter destruction, as happens to Anantdev in the play. This was exacerbated after the insurgency as people lost their loved ones, their homes, their very homeland, becoming strangers to themselves as they were scattered to the winds like ashes. Not surprisingly, fire appears as a weapon of violence with the ability to destroy homes, cities, and shrines, since Kemmu was prompted to finish the play after seeing Chrar Sharif burning on television. The play thus ends with the destruction of Bijbehara and its temple—which represents the land as a whole as well as its ethos—by fire. This led Kemmu to ask: 'Why are we [Kashmiris] subjected to trial by fire over and over again; how many more times do we have to suffer this in our present and future?'[141] The image of the suffering Kashmiri, bruised and battered by political and natural calamities, had been refreshed once again in the Kashmiri narrative public.

Nagar Vodase was translated into Hindi as *Nagar Udas* by Gauri Shankar Raina,[142] and staged based on Raina's script at the Sri Ram Centre for the Performing Arts in Delhi in 2001. Mushtaq Kak, the director, told me that he had chosen to direct the play because it was a historical drama that bore striking resemblance to socio-political conditions in contemporary Kashmir, particularly through the themes of violence, forced migration, conflict, injustice, and revenge. For him, the relationships among Anantdev, Kalashdev, and Harshdev and their impact on Kashmir mirrored the contemporary figures of Sheikh Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah, and Omar Abdullah. While Sheikh Abdullah was a saintly figure who fought for justice and self-rule for Kashmiris, his son Farooq Abdullah wrecked havoc on the land. And Omar Abdullah had recently (at the time the play was staged) been appointed party president of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, with much hope being vested in his leadership to take Kashmiri politics in a new direction. Kak chose to stage the play in Delhi instead of Srinagar in order to make a national audience aware of the plight of Kashmiris, both historically and in the contemporary period.[143] The reviews of the play recognized that it was 'an attempt to indicate a contemporary situation by recalling history'.[144]

Just as *Nagar Vodase* embodies the very crisis in Kashmir, its playwright Moti Lal Kemmu's body of work embodies the transactions among multiple languages and genres, and lies at the intersection of textuality, orality, storytelling, and performance, as well as the past and the present. Its tales are still drawn from a common fund of textual and oral traditions, even as they are recast to engage with, more overtly than ever before, novel political conditions. From Kemmu's work it is evident that he sees Kashmir's oral traditions as the voice of the Kashmiri people, the only arena in which Kashmiris can engage with the past, and inevitably its current situation, through storytelling and performance.[145]

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The Kashmiri narrative public was a dense network of stories, ideas, and genres that interacted and circulated in several languages and in multiple media through the intercession of a variety of individuals. Storytelling defined this space and formed the crucial link between its oral and textual domains, which coexisted in a symbiotic relationship to each other. Far from rendering it ahistorical, it was precisely the presence of these 'novelistic and dramatic'[146] elements that allowed the narrative public to bring the past to its audience. Within storytelling, the past existed not as a sequence of rulers located in chronological time, but rather a set of stories associated with well-known personalities and events. Time, when it was invoked, was relational—it could refer to a time of famine, or an especially good harvest, or the advent of Islam. Or it was personified, usually as a youth, always restless, forever on the move.[147]

Furthermore, the adaptation of stories across time periods, linguistic boundaries, and genres illustrates their ability to serve multiple purposes for different audiences. Their retellings provided a forum for diverse groups of people to interact with the long narrative tradition, and through it, play a role in shaping the idea of Kashmir. The Kashmiri narrative public and its participants did not make a distinction among history, memory, factual, and fictive, each of which played a specific role in commemorating the land's past. Kashmir

itself, as much as Kashmir's past, thus, was a product of this distinct Kashmiri historicity. Significantly, these engagements with the past, as we have seen, were far more deeply imbued with the sense of Kashmir as a place rather than as a political territory with defined borders.

This was possible, in part, because the Kashmiri narrative public operated in a realm that was relatively autonomous of the state, and in the late nineteenth century, it continued to function parallel to colonial and orientalist literary projects. The absence of the emergence of history as a professional discipline further ensured the constitution of historical memory through a range of interactive practices that drew together elite authors, ordinary performers, and their audiences. The invocation of mystical and historical figures and the physical space in and around shrines played a significant role in providing authentication and legitimacy, as well as an arena for the interactions among texts, performances, and their auteurs.

This should not suggest, however, that the Kashmiri narrative public was apolitical or devoid of conflict. Indeed, it was very cognizant of difference, along lines of religion, sect, politics, and even class, but at the same time, it was a forum where these differences could be discussed and negotiated. While single texts could, and often did, as we have seen, put forward ideologically partisan perspectives aimed at particular groups, the oral domain operated differently because it drew on a variety of sources and necessarily needed to appeal to broader audiences in the more immediate context of performance.[148] In this domain, well-known stories took on new form and meaning depending on the demands of the moment, such as through an emphasis on the vagaries of the downtrodden Kashmiri's fortunes and the collective suffering of Kashmiris regardless of religious identity, or the more recent rendition of *Himal Nagaray* as the love story of a Kashmiri Muslim man for a Kashmiri Pandit woman.

Finally, the importance of the Kashmiri language in shaping the narrative public cannot be overemphasized. It was Kashmiri that allowed the traversal of the boundaries of genre, language, textuality, and of print and orality, as well as that of the historical and the commemorative, within the narrative public. Despite, and

perhaps because of, the denial of state patronage, and later neglect by the Kashmiri nationalist movement, the language functioned as a medium of intimacy, poetry, and protest in oral, manuscript, and print realms. Multiple types of Kashmiri verse kept the people in touch with their long narrative tradition in Sanskrit and Persian, while also allowing them to participate in understanding their contemporary moment in the context of the past. Indeed, in the contemporary situation where Kashmiris have been rarely allowed to have a political voice, it is only in Kashmiri within the narrative public, where the same stories circulate in new forms, that Kashmiris have been able to express themselves in order to retain a sense of individuality and historical identity.

A discussion of the public domain in contemporary Kashmir, however, would be incomplete without a study of the English and Urdu press and publications market that is associated with the media, and the now professionalized discipline of history. These arenas have come to play an increasingly important role in defining Kashmir's political present by harnessing its past. The final chapter turns to the debates within these arenas to explore the ways in which they are rethinking Kashmiris' engagement with their own past, and through it, how they are reshaping the definition of Kashmir itself.

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[1] Interview with Muhammad Ismail Mir, Mujgond, Kashmir, 8 October 2009.

[2] In mid-eleventh-century Kashmir, Somadeva, a court poet of Raja Anantdev, collected more than 350 stories circulating in Kashmir and recorded them in the famous text, *Katha Sarit Sagara* (Ocean of the Streams of Stories). A 'real historical landscape' can be identified in the text, which, it can also be argued, both in terms of style and content, became a model for Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, written a century later. See Serebryakov, 'A Few Thoughts on the *Katha Sarit Sagara*', in trans. Tawney, vol. I (1968), p. c. See also, Khayal, *Shiraza* 45, no. 8–11 (undated), pp. 347–54. In his novel *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), Salman Rushdie presents Kashmir and its people as synonymous with its stories, storytellers, and performers. Indeed the title character, Shalimar, is a professional *bhand* (performer).

[3] Daud Ali argues that thirteenth- to fifteenth-century *prabandha* literature from western India blended the styles of *katha* (story) literature that narrated stories

about a mythical past with more traditional courtly narratives that dealt with the recent past. See Ali (2013), pp. 237–59.

[4] The transactions between oral traditions and Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* are evident from the introduction and notes to M. A. Stein's English translation of the text and Pandit Anand Koul's discussion of the early history of Kashmir. See Stein, 2 vols (1979) [1900]; Koul (1910), pp. 195–219. According to T. N. Ganjju, a retired professor of Sanskrit and a scribe, he grew up listening to stories from *Rajatarangini* narrated on cold winter evenings by elders in the family. Interview with T. N. Ganjju, Srinagar, Kashmir, 20 July 2009.

[5] Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 179.

[6] As Ramya Sreenivasan notes, the simultaneity of the existence of South Asian narrative traditions in 'oral performance and manuscript form … distinguishes India from predominantly oral cultures in Africa and Central Asia'. See Sreenivasan (2007), p. 11. In the case of Central Asia, however, Ron Sela has recently demonstrated the existence of narrative traditions related to Timur Lane simultaneously in manuscript form and oral tradition, and the intimate exchanges between textuality and orality, as well as history and legend, within these traditions since the eighteenth century. See Sela (2011).

[7] Stephen Berkwitz makes this argument in relation to the production and consumption of medieval Sri Lankan Buddhist *vamsa*s. See Berkwitz (2004), p. 230; see also Chapter 5.

[8] Bayly (1999), p. 182.

[9] Ibid., p. 180.

[10] Ibid., pp. 207–10.

[11] Novetzke (2009), pp. 13–14.

[12] Novetzke (2009), pp. 16–17.

[13] Ibid., p. 18.

[14] Ibid., pp. 20–1.

[15] Ibid., p. 30.

[16] Ibid., p. 40.

[17] Mir (2010), p. 12.

[18] Ibid., p. 99.

[19] Ibid., pp. 91–2, 98–100.

[20] Deshpande (2007), p. 6.

[21] Interview with Peerzada Muhammad Ashraf, Srinagar, Kashmir, 7 July 2009; Interview with Ganjju, 20 July 2009; Interview with G. M. Shaad, Bijbehara, Kashmir, 27 September 2009.

[22] See, for instance, Ong (1982). Novetzke challenges the teleology of a society's movement from orality to textuality as evidence of its growing complexity in the context of the Namdev tradition in Maharashtra. See Novetzke (2003), pp. 237–8; see also, Novetzke (2009).

[23] Manjeet Baruah has argued that pre-colonial texts were hybrid, while modern literary texts became mono-texts, existing only in manuscript/printed form. Baruah (2013), pp. 658–9. This, however, was not the case in Kashmir, where texts co-existed simultaneously in written, oral, and performance mediums well into the twentieth century.

[24] Aazim (1991), pp. 4–5; Sufi, vol. II (1974) [1949], p. 409.

[25] The authors of the tazkiras discussed in Chapter 1—*Dastur-us Salikin* and *Taufat-ul Ahbab*—drew their legitimacy from having been in the presence of the saint whose life they were recording, and his close disciples. The texts are replete with stories that were 'heard' by the authors while being recounted to them by either the saint himself or his disciples. See, for instance, Kashmiri, trans. Pandit (2009), pp. 91–3. For a discussion of the importance of person to person transmission of knowledge within the Islamic tradition, see Robinson (1993), pp. 234–9. For a discussion of the history of the concept of hearing in the European/American contexts, see Rosenfeld (2011), pp. 316–34.

[26] Green (2012), p. 208.

[27] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 12ff.

[28] Kachru (1846), pp. 206ff.

[29] Khuihami, trans. Kabir (undated), pp. 115–24.

[30] Syeed (2010), p. 13.

[31] Shahabadi (1778), pp. 173ff.

[32] Ibid.

[33] See, for instance, Kachru (1846), pp. 96–8ff.

[34] See, for instance, Shahabadi (1778), pp. 173ff.

[35] Zaffar, 'Mystical Thought of Kashmir', in Khan (2012), p. 72.

[36] Munshi, 'Kashmiri Poetic Traditions' (paper presented on April 9, 2011). As Suvir Kaul points out, 'phrases and lines from the poems of … Lal Ded and Sheikh Nooruddin (Nund Rishi) are treated as maxims, and spoken often enough to constitute the common sense of the land'. See Kaul (2011), p. 176.

[37] Gramsci defined common sense as 'not something rigid and immobile, but … [something] continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life. "Common sense" is the folklore of philosophy, and is always half-way between folklore properly speaking and the philosophy, science, and economics of the specialists'. See Gramsci, ed. and trans. Hoare and Smith (1971), p. 326.

[38] Dening (2008), p. 145.

[39] Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 179.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Stein, 'Memoir', in Stein, vol. II (1979) [1900], p. 385.

[42] Hugel (2003) [1845], pp. 1–3.

[43] Stories were told not just to Europeans, but also circulated amongst the servants of the travelling company. Rassul Galwan of Leh, who served as a guide to several Europeans on their tours around Kashmir and Ladakh in the early twentieth century, noted in his book that during their free time, the Kashmiri table-boys told him and the other servants many stories of the old kings of Kashmir. He does not record the content of the stories, however. See Galwan (1924), pp. 62–3.

[44] Hugel (2003) [1845], pp. 160–1.

[45] Ibid., p. 143.

[46] Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 184.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Lawrence (1996) [1895], pp. 184–5.

[49] Vigne, vol. II (1842), pp. 50–1.

[50] Hugel (2003) [1845], p. 128.

[51] Vigne, vol. II (1842), pp. 51–2; Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 192. Textual variations of this story appear in Khasta (1994) [1877], p. 250; Kachru (1846), pp. 93ff. In Khasta's version, it is not the Sultan, but the ulema who force Kashmiri Pandits to eat cold food and learn Persian after the incident that leads to the prince's illness and recovery.

[52] Lawrence (1996) [1895], pp. 190–1.

[53] See Khanyari, trans. Lone (2006), p. 127.

[54] Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 193.

[55] Ibid., pp. 193–4.

[56] Lawrence (1996) [1895], pp. 196–7.

[57] Vigne (1842), pp. 141–2.

[58] Ibid., pp. 164–5.

[59] Kachru (1846), pp. 168–9ff.

[60] Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 195.

[61] Koul (1991), p. 59. In his discussion of Kashmir's political history in the book, which was written in 1924, Koul often cites the verses of 'bards' as his sources.

[62] Lawrence (1996) [1895], pp. 198–200.

[63] This famine is described in most nineteenth-century Persian historical narratives; see for instance, Khanyari, trans. Lone (2006), p. 243.

[64] Lawrence (1996) [1895], pp. 200, 213.

[65] Koul (1991) [1924], p. 69.

[66] Knowles (1981) [1888], p. ix.

[67] See Dening (2002), pp. 1–24.

[68] Novetzke (2009), p. 20.

[69] Stein, 'Preface', in Grierson (1989) [1923], pp. xi–xii; Lawrence (1996) [1895], pp. 256–7, 312–13; Duke (1888), p. 33; Fayaz (2001), pp. 60–3; Interview with Mir, 8 October 2009; Interview with Shaad, 27 September 2009; Interview with Gulshan Majeed, Srinagar, Kashmir, 2 September and 2 and 3 October 2009; Kemmu, 'Bhand Pather (Folk Theatre of Kashmir)', in Badam and Chakravarty (2010), pp. 157–62.

[70] Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 313.

[71] Fayaz (2001), pp. 60–1; Interview with Mir, 8 October 2009.

[72] Grierson (1929), p. 75; see also, Grierson and Barnett (1920), pp. 3–4; Stein, 'Preface', in Grierson (1989) [1923], pp. xi–xiii.

[73] Lawrence (1996) [1895], p. 256.

[74] Kemmu (2001), pp. 33–4; Teng, 'Preface', in Bhagat (1984), pp. 6–7; Pushp, 'Old Origins and New Forms', in Bhagat (1984), pp. 10, 21; Syeed (2010), pp. 12–13.

[75] Interview with Mir, 8 October 2009 and 22 July 2011.

[76] Anon., 'Ladishah', in Thakur, vol. IV (2002), pp. 329–34; Fayaz (2001), p. 63; Interview with Majeed, 30 September 2009.

[77] Anon., 'Ladishah', in Thakur, vol. IV (2002), p. 332.

[78] Aatish, vol. XI (2007), pp. 155–9. This ladishah is not quoted in its entirety. All translations from Kashmiri are mine.

[79] In his eighteenth-century history, for instance, Dyadmari described the famine of 1742 in great detail, noting that stories were circulating about people consuming dead bodies and roasting children as a result of food shortages. See Dyadmari, trans. Ali (2000) [1846], pp. 327–8.

[80] Aatish, vol. XI (2007), pp. 122–3. This ladishah is not quoted in its entirety.

[81] Interview with Majeed, 30 September 2009; Interview with Shaad, 27 September 2009.

[82] Interview with Mir, 22 July 2011.

[83] Aatish, vol. XI (2007), p. 129.

[84] The trajectory of the Kashmiri language and the role it played in disseminating ideas within the Kashmiri public sphere through manuscripts, print, and performance, despite or perhaps because of the lack of state patronage, bears a strong resemblance to Punjabi in the neighbouring province of the British Punjab, as discussed by Mir (2010).

[85] Aazim (1991), pp. 1–6; Sufi, vol. II (1974) [1949], p. 409; Fayaz (2001), p. 61.

[86] Interview with Ashraf, Srinagar, Kashmir, 17 July 2011. Kashmir has a long history of multilingual engagement with *Yusuf-Zuleikha*. It was first translated by Pandit Srivara into Sanskrit as *Katha Kautukam*, in Sultan Zain ul-Abidin's court in the late fifteenth century. In the late eighteenth century, Mahmud Gami translated the Persian *masnavi* into Kashmiri verse, and Anwar Shah Shupiani carried out another Kashmiri verse translation in the nineteenth century. See Pollock (2001a), p. 419 (10n); Aazim (1991), p. 5; Interview with Shaad, 27 September 2009.

[87] Interview with Majeed, 16 July 2011.

[88] Several manuscripts of Kashmiri poems were acquired by Buhler during his tour to collect Sanskrit manuscripts in Kashmir in 1875, including *Dastaan-i Mahmud Ghaznav* and *Yusuf-Zuleikha*, both by Mahmud Gami. See Buhler (1877), pp. li–lii.

[89] Interview with Sheikh Muhammad Waseem, Srinagar, Kashmir, 18 July 2011. Today, the family's many descendants, including Waseem (Sheikh Ghulam Muhammad's grandson), have their own bookshops and publishing businesses across Srinagar. The main bookshop is now located in Lal Chowk, Srinagar.

[90] For instance, Azizullah Hakkani, *Chandrabadan Barzabane Kashmiri* (Lahore: Railway Press, 1928), at the request of Ghulam Muhammad Noor Muhammad Booksellers, Srinagar); Moulvi Ali Baba, *Qissa-i Shah Mandud Barzabane Kashmiri* (Lahore: Rafiq-i Am Press, 1929), at the request of Ghulam Muhammad Noor Muhammad Booksellers, Srinagar); Muhammad Afzal, *Jang-i Badar Barzabane Kashmiri* (Srinagar: Ghulam Muhammad Noor Muhammad, probably 1940s). *Chandrabadan* is a dastaan about a beautiful woman named

Chandrabadan; *Qissa-i Shah Mandud* is the story about Shah Mandud's meeting with Solomon, in which Solomon imparts to him a lesson about the ephemeral nature of power and wealth and the permanence of divine love; and *Jang-i Badar* is a dastaan based on Sheikh Yacub Sarfi's *Magaz-ul-Nabi* (Battles of the Prophet) in Persian. Sarfi was a sixteenth-century Sufi mystic and poet from Kashmir. There were numerous other Kashmiri poems printed in pamphlet form in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[91] Hakkani (1928); Afzal (1940s).

[92] For an insightful discussion of the layered idea of authorship, which he terms 'corporate authorship', in the context of the Namdev tradition in Maharashtra, see Novetzke (2003), pp. 213–42.

[93] Interview with Waseem, 18 July 2011.

[94] Interview with Muhammad Ashraf Tak, Srinagar, Kashmir, 22 July 2011.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ulrike Stark argues that Munshi Newal Kishore was not simply driven by profit, but rather 'by the twin objectives of popularizing India's literary heritage and contributing to the diffusion of knowledge in the vernaculars'. She notes that Newal Kishore transformed the Press into 'a vibrant intellectual centre and meeting place for scholars and literati of various kinds'. See Stark, 'Hindi Publishing in the Heart of an Indo-Persian Cultural Metropolis', in Blackburn and Dalmia (2004), p. 255.

[97] Interview with Waseem, 18 July 2011.

[98] Interview with Ashraf, 17 July 2011; Interview with Tak, 22 July 2011.

[99] Interview with Tak, 22 July 2011.

[100] Interview with Ashraf, 17 July 2011.

[101] Aazim (1991), pp. 13–30.

[102] Interview with Mir, 8 October 2009.

[103] Interview with Mir, 8 October 2009 and 22 July 2011.

[104] Koul (1910), pp. 201–2. See also Aatish (1991–1993) pp. 93–4.

[105] Khanyari, trans. Lone (2006), p. 38.

[106] Aatish (1991–1993), p. 94; Sufi, vol. II (1974) [1949], p. 479; Kachru (1981), p. 36; Shauq, 'Tarabali, Saifuddin', in Lal, vol. 5 (1992), pp. 4299–4300.

[107] Knowles (1981) [1888], p. 414.

[108] Knowles (1981) [1888]. Joshua Duke too noted the existence of the Kashmiri story *Himal Nagaray* in textual form, and pointed out that it was one of the stories 'constantly quoted by bards and others'. Duke (1888), p. 33.

[109] Mir (2010), pp. 86–7.

[110] The story has been paraphrased from Knowles (1981) [1888], pp. 399–414 and Mir's narration, 22 July 2011.

[111] Narration by Mir, 22 July 2011; Knowles (1981) [1888], p. 414.

[112] Kashmiris continue to visit and accept as sacred the almost dried-up springs of Himal and Nagaray outside the town of Shopian, one of which now lies in the midst of an army camp. See Peer (2010), pp. 207–8.

[113] Interview with Mir, 8 October 2009.

[114] Aatish (1991–1993), p. 93.

[115] Mir (2010), p. 4.

[116] Raina (1972), pp. 4–9. All these individuals began as poets in Urdu, and to a lesser extent Persian, but made the shift to writing poetry in Kashmiri by the 1940s.

[117] For a discussion of the role played by Kashmiri poetry as a powerful form of protest in contemporary Kashmir, see Kaul (2011), pp. 173–202.

[118] For a comprehensive discussion of cultural activities in Kashmir in this period, particularly in theatre and the arts, see Tamiri (2010).

[119] Quoted in Ahmad (2008), p. 113.

[120] *A Handbook of Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages* (undated), pp. 3–7.

[121] Interview with Tak, 22 July 2011.

[122] The Academy is particularly interested in conserving what it terms the 'folklore' of Kashmir, especially dastaan and ladishah. Towards this end, it has published several collections of Kashmiri folk verses and recorded Muhammad Ismail Mir performing the dastaan entitled *Shah Lal*, which has been buried for three hundred years for posterity. Interview with Mir, 22 July 2011.

[123] Sadhu (1967), p. vi. Sadhu also edited a collection of Kashmiri folk tales, noting in the preface that several tales in the volume were 'based on incidents centering on real persons'. See Sadhu (1962), p. viii.

[124] As Basharat Peer notes in his memoir of growing up in Anantnag, Kashmir in the 1980s, his grandmother and their servant narrated Persian and Kashmiri tales to the children. See Peer (2010), p. 6. My own grandparents, who were born and raised in Kashmir, told similar stories in lands far away from Kashmir, such as Delhi and Jaipur, to their grandchildren.

[125] Interview with Majeed, 16 July 2011.

[126] Tamiri (2010), pp. 44–5.

[127] Interview with Moti Lal Kemmu, Jammu, 11 March 2010.

[128] Toshakhani (undated pamphlet), pp. 1–2.

[129] Pushp, 'Old Origins and New Forms', in Bhagat (1984), p. 14.

[130] Kemmu, 'Aatam Kathya', in Toshakhani (undated pamphlet), p. 8; Tamiri (2010), p. 44.

[131] Toshakhani (undated pamphlet), pp. 7–8.

[132] Ibid., pp. 8–10.

[133] Kemmu, 'Aatam Kathya', in Toshakhani (undated pamphlet), p. 5; Interview with Kemmu, 11 March 2010.

[134] Toshakhani (undated pamphlet), pp. 10–11.

[135] Ibid., pp. 12–13.

[136] Ibid., pp. 13–16.

[137] Kemmu (2007); Toshakhani (undated pamphlet), p. 16.

[138] Interview with Kemmu, 11 March 2010.

[139] Raina (2007), pp. 11–84; Toshakhani (undated pamphlet), pp. 16–18.

[140] Interview with Kemmu, 11 March 2010.

[141] Interview with Kemmu, 11 March 2010.

[142] See Raina (2007), pp. 11–84.

[143] Interview with Mushtaq Kak, Jammu, 7 March 2010.

[144] Nagpal (2001); see also, Chander (2001).

[145] For a poignant discussion of the contemporary struggles of the bhand pether in Kashmir, see Syeed (2010), pp. 11–17.

[146] Mantena (2007), p. 407.

[147] Interview with Majeed, 7 July 2012.

[148] For the ability of oral traditions to transcend narrow caste and religious boundaries, see Mir (2010); Amin, 'On Retelling the Muslim Conquest of North India', in Chatterjee and Ghosh (2002), pp. 24–43.

6

THE DIVIDED PUBLIC

Battles over History and Territory in Contemporary Kashmir

'Kashmir's politics is a prisoner of Kashmir's past,' said Balraj Puri, the noted political commentator on Kashmir affairs and one-time member of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, in a recent conversation.[1] Puri was referring to Jammu and Kashmir's divided public domain, where pitched and unrelenting ideological battles over its political situation are fought in terms of its history. The Kashmiri narrative public, which as we have seen, had allowed for an intertwining of multiple languages, genres, texts, and oral traditions in producing a coherent sense of a place and its past, is being increasingly overtaken in contemporary Kashmir with the emergence of alternate publics in which its past is constructed and debated. This 'heterogeneous formation of several publics',[2] such as academic history and the press, are generating a deeply polarized discourse about Kashmir's past as a territory rather than a place, with all sides laying claim to presenting *the* objective and true history. This chapter traces the relationships among these publics and the lines along which debates about the past are carried out within them, while also probing the limits and potential of both disciplinary and popular history in contemporary Kashmir.

Academic versus Popular History

Recently, the discipline of history in South Asia has begun to turn a self-critical eye towards examining its continued salience in the public domain in terms of, as noted by Partha Chatterjee, 'its intense awareness of the place of history in the present and its willingness, indeed its urge, to rethink the constitution of that place'.[3] This move has been spurred by the proliferation of local historical narratives throughout India which represent narrow political and ideological interests and do not necessarily respect the methodological principles of the discipline. Political movements such as in the Punjab or the North-East in the 1980s, as well as ongoing caste debates, drew and continue to draw on history, in many cases academic histories, to put forward their partisan agendas.[4] The relationship between history and ideology came to national attention during the history textbook controversy, generated when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government undertook the task of rewriting school textbooks in the late 1990s to align them with its ideological agenda of *Hindutva*. The controversy regarding who had the right to write the past, and indeed what the content of the past was to be, continued to rage as the Congress-led government that followed the BJP sought to replace the BJP textbooks with new ones in 2005.

The response of the discipline of history to these ideological attacks on its very foundations has been to assert the distinction between academic and popular history, while urging academic history to bridge the gap between the two. In discussing the textbook controversy, Nivedita Menon pointed out that there have always been two strands of history in place in India—one that was located within the academy and put forward a secular narrative of India's past, which it argued was constructed through a dialogue amongst different religious groups and political ideologies, and the other that circulated in the streets and hailed India as a Hindu nation whose golden age was destroyed by the advent of Islam. What had changed as a result of the controversy was that it had forced academic history to recognize the existence of and engage with the popular narrative of India's past.[5]

Popular (sometimes also called vernacular) history, according to this scholarship, focuses on historical grievance and seeks its

‘validation from forces in the domain of the popular’.[6] The past and the present become increasingly intermeshed in these histories as they invoke ‘historical wounds’, a term used by Dipesh Chakrabarty to describe a form of historical narrative that ‘appeal[s] to one’s present “experience” as a guide to one’s past’.[7] The media plays a significant role in the ‘commodification of experience’ related to these grievances and wounds, and Chakrabarty suggests that in the face of forms of ‘instantaneous persuasion’ offered by global media, historians will need to reconsider their definition of historical objectivity as dependent on proof and evidence drawn from the archives.[8]

Academic historians, it is becoming increasingly clear from these discussions, can ignore the popular at their own peril. It appears that the only way for academic history to prevail in this ongoing battle between the two strands is to think about history as ‘political intervention’, as Menon suggests, in which the academic historian’s task would be not just to write history, but—in an attempt to shape the present and the future—to also make it.[9] This sentiment is echoed by Chatterjee, who also argues for a more interventionist role for academic history, and calls on the historian to act, ‘not because it was functional or prudent, but because the present—the time itself—demanded it’.[10]

Defining a relationship between academic and popular history is admittedly a significant issue, and rendering academic history more political can be the first step. However, the larger question of what contribution, if any, academic history can make towards resolving conflicts, such as in Kashmir or the North-East, continues to loom. In this case, rendering it political does not seem to provide a real solution. I say this because if one studies the case of Kashmir, academic history is already political, which appears to have contributed even further to the divisiveness in the public domain over representations of the past and the present. Indeed, the academic and the popular are so entwined that they are barely distinguishable, as they continually reinforce each other’s claims as historical truth. This becomes particularly significant because the popular domain can be, and often is, deeply reactionary and can

incite violence, partly because it focuses on historical grievances, and especially when it seeks (and receives) validation from academic history for these past misdeeds.[11]

For instance, the idea of the ongoing enslavement and oppression of Kashmiris by successive foreign entities beginning with the Mughals, and continuing with the Afghans, Sikhs, Dogras, and Indians is a particularly powerful sentiment that finds purchase amongst a cross-section of society—from old to young, academics to taxi drivers, men and women alike in contemporary Kashmir. This idea is incessantly paraded in academic works and the press, both of which claim legitimacy for it from drawing instantaneous parallels between present and past events, while remaining couched in the language of objectivity.[12]

This was especially apparent in the July 2010 and 2011 articles and internet discussions that sought to memorialize the events of 13 July 1931. This day in 1931, when several Kashmiri Muslims were killed during a protest against the Dogra State, has come to be labelled as ‘Martyrs’ Day’ or ‘Kashmir Day’. Its commemoration has become a means for Kashmir’s press to seamlessly draw the past and the present together as they equate Kashmiri Muslim resistance to a ‘Hindu’ state eighty years ago to the contemporary Kashmiri rebellion against the Indian state apparatus in Kashmir. For them, there is no difference between those Kashmiris who died in the 1931 protest and those who died in the street protests in 2010 and 2011—they are all martyrs for the cause of Kashmir’s freedom. As Riyaz Ahmed noted in an editorial in *Greater Kashmir*, the precise factual details of what happened in 1931 were unimportant. Instead, the date and the July 13 martyrs symbolized ‘the original sacrifice from which stemmed the subsequent history of resistance’. Equally significantly, this memory of resistance fractures Kashmiri nationalism from the narrative of Indian resistance to British rule, rendering it unique and local. At the same time, it highlights the unchanged situation of Kashmiris as they continue to struggle against tyranny, in Ahmed’s words, in their ‘continuing quest for that elusive destiny of the people of Kashmir whose longing 1931 martyrs helped plant in their hearts and minds’.[13]

Kashmiri Pandit organizations, on the other hand, commemorated July 13 as ‘Black Day’, describing the events of July 1931 as ‘the beginning of the first organised genocide of Kashmiri Pandits’, that culminated in the mass exodus of the community in 1990. Focusing on the importance of setting the historical record straight to prevent ‘the distortion of the history of Kashmir’, the speakers during these events argued that the ‘ethnic cleansing’ of Kashmiri Pandits had begun with the advent of Muslim rule in Kashmir and continued into the present. Thus for them, the real martyrs were not the Kashmiri Muslims who died in 1931 or those who are dying on the streets of Kashmir today, but rather the ‘Kashmiri Pandit victims of communal carnage’.[14]

What ultimately underlies these attempts at annexing Kashmir’s past, in essence, is to present Kashmir as a territory and to draw the lines around who has the right to belong to this territory, and by extension, claim legitimate membership in the Kashmiri national community. Unfortunately, what these debates invariably end up doing is casting the present conflict in Kashmir in terms of an inevitable struggle between Hindus and Muslims, whether an oppressive Hindu state and its victimized Muslim citizens, or a dominant majority Muslim community and persecuted Hindu minorities. This, as much as the official nationalist narratives of Kashmir’s history, suppresses people’s historical memories about their land and the successive groups of people who made it home.

Can academic history intervene in this discourse to provide a different view of the past, without questioning its own disciplinary foundations? Perhaps the answer lies in the Kashmiri narrative public, which provides an alternate means of engaging with the past. But is it possible to sustain the accommodative features of the Kashmiri narrative public in the context of the current conflict and the onslaught of histories that claim objectivity? As Basharat Peer notes in his memoir of growing up in Kashmir, partly during the conflict, Kashmiris no longer seemed to tell good stories to each other. The stories narrated nowadays were almost entirely about the violence and brutality inflicted on people and their kin by paramilitary forces or militants.[15] And yet, it is in works such as Peer’s memoir, or novels such as *The Collaborator*,[16] or plays such as *Nagar*

Vodase, or people's stories and memories, that one can see the persistence of the narrative public. It is with this public that academic history needs to engage, if it wants to remain relevant during, and indeed contribute something beneficial to, this moment of crisis in Kashmir.

Contesting Kashmir's Past

The arenas in which Kashmir's past is most vociferously debated include institutions such as the University of Kashmir (in particular the departments of History, Kashmiri, and Central Asian Studies), the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages (Cultural Academy, of short), the Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Research Centre, the Institute of Kashmir Studies, and a range of media outlets such as *Greater Kashmir* and the *Kashmir Times*, as well as online news-magazines such as the *Conveyor*. The press and publications market in English and Urdu generated by these institutions defines the contours of the contemporary debates over Kashmir's past in the context of its present. As noted earlier, the distinction between the academic and the popular within these domains is almost meaningless, as all sides present their opinions regarding the past as impartial truth based on empirical research.

Discussions of Kashmir's history pivot around the acceptance or rejection of the idea of *Kashmiriyat*. This well-established idea first introduced by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir in the immediate post-independence period, asserts that Kashmir was (and is) the repository of a composite, syncretistic culture—known as Kashmiriyat—embodied by a blending of different religious and cultural traditions, including Buddhism, Shaivism, Sufism, and Islam. The opponents of this idea embody a range of opinions—from those who deny Kashmir a pre-Islamic past altogether to those who view Kashmiriyat as an imposition of Indian secularism to still others who insist on presenting Kashmir as the font of Hinduism.

The Kashmiriyat idea has been propounded in the publications of institutions such as the Cultural Academy.[17] This institution continues to publish a variety of literary narratives in Kashmiri, Urdu, and English, and patronizes the translation of Kashmiri literature into

Urdu and English and vice versa. For instance, the Academy chose to sponsor a Kashmiri translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*—published in 2005—to serve as a symbol of Kashmiriyat during a period of heightened religious tension in Kashmir. In keeping with the motto of the Academy, the translation, which was carried out by prominent Kashmiri poets, two Pandits and a Muslim—Arjun Deb Majboor, Bashar Bashir, and Moti Lal Saqi—was cast as a joint Hindu–Muslim enterprise.

Further, the translation reclaimed *Rajatarangini* as a uniquely Kashmiri text, the real literary texture of which could be captured only through its rendition into the Kashmiri language. Describing Kalhana as a true son of 'Mother Kashmir', its foreword states that his text was replete with the 'scent of the earth of Kashmir'. Although many had plumbed its depths by translating it into different languages, none had been from Kashmir; the current Kashmiri translation by Kashmiris, thus, was dedicated to Kalhana.[18] This was a reassertion of the Kashmiri claim over *Rajatarangini*, which was in the process resurrected as a regional literary text through, significantly, its translation into the regional vernacular. Thus, *Rajatarangini* was to be seen not as a text linked to one religious group, but as belonging to the literary heritage of all Kashmiris.

Unfortunately, the idea of the Hindu authorship of *Rajatarangini* and its Sanskrit continuations continues to drive many contemporary engagements with these texts, particularly within writings that seek to oppose Kashmiriyat as a primary prism through which to view Kashmir's past. Organizations such as the Islamic Research Centre for instance, aim to present Kashmir's history primarily in Islamic terms. In the recent past, the Centre has sponsored the publication of several Urdu and Kashmiri translations of Persian historical and other narratives from Kashmir, such as Dyadmari's *Waqiat-i Kashmir*.[19] Other publishers, such as Gulshan Books and Jay Kay Bookshop (both are descendents of Ghulam Muhammad Noor Muhammad Publishers, of early-twentieth-century Srinagar), have also mined the depths of Kashmir's historical literature to sponsor English and Urdu translations of Persian and Urdu texts, as well as, in rare cases, Sanskrit texts.[20] While the former are claimed by their translators as Muslim texts that embody the great Islamic culture of

Kashmir encapsulated in its Persian literary tradition and the lives and deeds of its Sufi saints,[21] the latter are invariably presented as Hindu texts displaying a Hindu bias.[22]

In his introduction to Shamsuddin Ahmed's Urdu translation of *Waqiat-i Kashmir*, for instance, Abdul Rahman Kondoo hails *Waqiat-i Kashmir* as 'especially beneficial for Muslims', because it contains descriptions of the lives and works of the Sufi saints of Kashmir. Dyadmari's only fault, according to Kondoo, was that he characterized Sultan Sikandar as 'But Shikan' (iconoclast) and described his destruction of temples and idols in detail. In reality, Kondoo notes, when people converted to Islam, they themselves transformed their temples into mosques and shrines.[23] Similarly, in his note to his Urdu translation of *Rajatarangini*'s Sanskrit continuations, Ahmed insists that Jonaraja's designation of Sultan Sikandar as 'But Shikan' was historically incorrect and the result of his Brahmanical prejudice.[24] He details at length the anti-Muslim biases of Jonaraja and Srivara, who pandered to their Muslim patrons by day and vilified them by night: 'These books that slander Muslims as mlecchas, Turukshas, and Yavanas, should be banished from the pure land of Kashmir, but forgiving these authors for their crimes will earn merit for Kashmiri Muslims'.[25]

The Sanskrit texts, particularly those written during the time of the Muslim sultans, are thus presented as inherently flawed in terms of their objectivity. For Kondoo and Ahmed, designating Sultan Sikandar as an iconoclast gives credence to the idea that the conversion to Islam in Kashmir may have involved force. Thus, for them assertions to the contrary are in fact meant to define the narrative regarding Kashmir's transition to Islam as peaceful, harmonious, and natural. In part, this is a response to Kashmiri Pandit organizations in the diaspora, such as the Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata, that sponsor the publication of journals and books in which Kashmir's past is read as a series of persecutions of Kashmiri Pandits by Muslims in which Sultan Sikandar, invariably, appears as a villain. The forced migration of the Pandits from Kashmir in the early 1990s casts a long shadow over Kashmir's past, as it comes to be read as a continuation of earlier migrations from the Valley and

the inevitable and unending conflict between Hindus and Muslims. In this case, the *Rajatarangini* narratives are regarded as objective histories that present an accurate description of the past.[26]

For all sides, the debates hinge on staking a claim on defining Kashmir's political position as a territory within South Asia, vis-à-vis India in particular. Interestingly, Pakistan seldom makes an appearance in these discussions, in which Central Asia stands in for the larger Islamic world. The detractors of Kashmiriyat who cast Kashmir's past in Islamic terms deemphasize Kashmir's history and literary achievements prior to the advent of Islam, thereby adding power to their claims that Kashmir does not belong within the Union of India in the present. This view is based on the idea that India is Hindu and since Kashmir is not, it has a greater affinity to the larger Islamic world. Further, it plays into the idea of Kashmir's 'historic individuality',[27] and therefore also its claim to autonomy or independence. On the other hand, the proponents of Kashmir as a Hindu region, and hence for them naturally a part of India, celebrate Kashmir's rich history of contributions to Indian literature and philosophy, while ignoring political, literary, and other developments in later periods of Kashmir's history.

For the third set of opponents of Kashmiriyat, the term represents the 'colonization' of Kashmir's past by the state—both Kashmiri and Indian. According to this view, since the term is a mirror image of Indian secularism, the discourse surrounding it places Kashmir squarely within the Indian nationalist historical narrative, and thereby also within India. These ideas were particularly apparent in the controversy surrounding the founding of the Institute of Kashmir Studies in 2006, and its inauguration in 2008 by the President of India. The statement within the Institute's vision document —'Kashmir has been an integral part of the cultural mosaic of India and no study of Kashmiri thought and culture is possible without situating it within the broader perspective of Indian thought and culture'—became a lightning rod for all manner of attacks on the narrative of Kashmir's history represented by the term Kashmiriyat. Although the document equally extols Kashmir's historic ties to Persia and Central Asia, the earlier statement was seen as promoting the view that Kashmir belongs within the Union of India

‘under the garb of Kashmiriyat’, as noted by Mohammad Ashraf in his article, ‘Institute of Kashmir Studies (Myopic Vision Document Attempts to Bull Doze History)’.[28]

According to Ashraf, the statement was not only ‘a travesty of historical facts but a brazen attempt to bull doze Kashmir Studies towards a non-existent thought!’ Kashmiriyat did not define Kashmir’s past since it was no different than Punjabiat, Bengaliat, and so on, which were mere sub-identities of Indian national identity. Wresting the production of knowledge about Kashmir’s past from the term Kashmiriyat was also a means of resisting, what Ashraf described as, ‘this persistent onslaught aimed at mutilating and distorting our present’. Interestingly, Ashraf draws on M. A. Stein’s introduction to his translation of *Rajatarangini* to claim Kashmir’s lack of interaction with north India in the ancient past, based on Stein’s claim that Sanskrit literature outside the Valley did not mention Kashmir nor give its exact location.[29] This, for Ashraf, established the historical fact of Kashmir as a separate and distinct entity which was not linked in any way to Hindustan. Furthermore, rather than possessing any relationship to India, ‘Kashmiri thought and culture was an extension of greater Central Asian civilizations’, according to another writer.[30] This anonymous editorialist went so far as to suggest that the Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim periods of Kashmir’s history were distinct and needed ‘to be studied independent of each other’, instead of focusing on the interconnections across these periods.[31]

Other articles excoriated the Institute for organizing seminars on Kashmir’s hoary past to provide evidence for the existence of Kashmiriyat as a means to distract Kashmiris from relevant contemporary issues such as self-rule. ‘People here are craving to know what has happened in Kashmir since 1933’, one writer noted, and not that it was ‘an ancient seat of learning’.[32] Interestingly, in this case, the writer, Naseer Ganai, challenged not the content of the past, but rather the moments within it that were being emphasized by the discourse on Kashmiriyat. Kashmiris did not have the luxury, according to the Ganai, of discussing the ancient past, which was a subject that could be contemplated on ‘during

times of peace'.[33] History had to serve the demands of the present, and in the case of Kashmir's present, the only legitimate histories worthy of discussion were those that taught Kashmiris about the origins and development of their nationalist movement in the recent past. According to Ganai, Kashmir's academics had abdicated their responsibility in this regard by making a 'decision to talk about Kashmiriyat and Kashmiriyat alone',[34] which presumably existed only in Kashmir's ancient past.

Myth versus History

It is apparent that the fierce debates surrounding the historical vision represented by the Institute of Kashmir Studies, and Kashmir's past more generally, are not just about the content of that past, but are also attempts at rethinking the state-supported categories that have been applied to study Kashmir's history. Thus they are about the redefinition of history itself. Since the content of the past is so plagued by dissension, the advocates of each side endow their particular vision with the status of objective truth or 'real' history. Indeed, one of the significant means of casting doubt on an opposing viewpoint in historical publications and within the Kashmiri press is to denigrate it as partisan, as not being based on real facts, and hence as not being historical. Ashraf, for instance, labels the vision document's view of Kashmir's past as 'bigoted', 'communal', 'parochial', and 'chauvinist', while celebrating his own view of Kashmir's links to Hamadan and Tajikistan in Central Asia as historical fact.[35]

During our conversation, Ghulam Muhammad Shaad, a retired teacher of history, lamented the absence of real fact in historical compositions by Kashmiris, insisting that the intertwining of the literary and mythical with the factual was responsible for the endemic misinformation regarding Kashmir's past amongst people in Kashmir. 'If only people engaged with history as an objective set of facts', according to Shaad, 'Kashmir's past—and present—would become much clearer'.[36] Shaad was referring not only to historical

writing in the present, but Kashmir's long historical tradition itself, which, according to him, embodied 'impure history'.

Even those who call for the democratization of history, 'as being created as it is spoken about', rely on the idea of history as a verifiable set of facts, distinct from myth. In his article, 'Political Uses of the Official History of Kashmir', Mohamad Junaid draws on postmodern theory to argue that the history of Kashmir cannot be a single, hegemonic narrative imposed from above, but rather has to be viewed as a concatenation of multiple stories. This, however, for him, does not apply to the origin story of Kashmir and the role played by Kashyap Rishi in its emergence from the lake Satisar. This story, as amply demonstrated in earlier chapters, was the continuous thread that held together Kashmir's Sanskrit and Persian historical narratives—and indeed defined its historical tradition—through the centuries. According to Junaid, the idea of Kashmir having derived its name from 'a drummed up sage called Kashyap Muni', was no longer acceptable, as 'from history it has been dethroned and returned to its vague mythic status'.[37] Here too, thus, the other's stories about the past are relegated to myth while one's own stories acquire the stamp of legitimate history.

An insistence on history as a set of verifiable facts, however, belies the Kashmiri public's engagement with the past, which, as we have seen, continues to be informed through stories drawn from its rich narrative tradition. And in some ways, the insistence on objectivity and fact is an assertion against and an attempt to redefine this very engagement. The founding story of Kashmir, not surprisingly, thus, comes under consistent attack in the Kashmiri press. In an article in the monthly web magazine *Conveyor*, entitled, 'The Myth of Satisar', P. G. Rasool argues against the widespread and uncritical acceptance of the 'invented religious myth' of the emergence of Kashmir from Satisar through the efforts of Sage Kashyap and the gods. He notes that the myth was first recorded in the *Nilamata Purana*, which cannot be accorded the status of historical text, and then repeated in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, which too, 'is not a work of history'. And yet, it was accepted as historical fact, he states, in school textbooks, historical narratives, and more generally by the public.[38] Quoting the pre-eminent historian, Romila

Thapar, he argues that myth cannot be accorded the status of history.[39] The particular myth, moreover, was created merely as a means to 'establish the Indo-Aryan racial supremacy over the Aborigines, the Nagas in Kashmir'.[40]

Focusing on the origin story to assert the concept of history as a set of verifiable facts is telling because it is an attempt to rethink the way in which Kashmiris thought about and continue to think about the founding of their land, its historical tradition, and by extension, their own origins as well. The acceptance of a myth, now labelled 'Hindu', by a Muslim population is clearly regarded as problematic. But more significantly for its detractors, the acknowledgement of this myth has provided ammunition to those who argue that Kashmiri Muslims profess a different kind of Islam, an Islam influenced by Hindu practices and ideas, in effect rendering Kashmiri religious culture syncretistic. Thus implicit in the attack on myth in general and this myth in particular is an attack on categories such as syncretism that have often been deployed in studying Kashmir's history. Mohamad Junaid argues that ideas such as 'syncretism' and 'cultural mosaic' have been 'inflicted upon Kashmir's past', and belie the actual experience of Hindus and Muslims, who have very little in common, especially in doctrinal terms. Syncretism was a means, according to him, to 'soften the Muslimness in Muslims', by revealing a Hindu influence on them, so that they could be better integrated into India. He notes that the emphasis on locating the 'roots of Kashmir's "essence" in Hinduism, is at best ridiculous'.[41]

For Junaid, the use of syncretism is a classic example of how history should not be conducted: through the lens of the present. I think it can be safely stated that the concept of syncretism, particularly as applied to India's history, was clearly a product of its time and appears to have outlived its usefulness as an academic construct. Moreover, its utility as a means of understanding Kashmir's past, particularly in its Kashmiri form (Kashmiriyat), has been interrogated quite widely by historians of Kashmir, including in my own work. However, anyone writing about the past is located in a present, not least in Kashmir, where the past and the present are co-present at all times, including in Junaid's writings. For many like him, challenging the hegemonic ideas about Kashmir's history is a

powerful means of asserting Kashmir's independence from India in the present.[42]

But how are we to reconcile 'our' history with 'their' myths? This is a particularly thorny question if most people believe the myths to be historical, and not because they subscribe to the political ideology of Kashmiriyat or the academic category of syncretism, but rather because the Kashmiri narrative public continues to be informed by the oral-textual transactions between Kashmir's long storytelling and historical traditions. If 'alternative stories' of Kashmir's history are indeed possible because the official narrative is 'just a story', as Junaid argues, then the stories already circulating in Kashmir cannot be merely dismissed as myths, or else the new narrative will exclude the people as much as the official hegemonic narrative that it seeks to replace. Surely, asserting the truth claims of your own version of the narrative is not the solution, not least because, as Menon points out in the context of the history textbook controversy, 'there is an irresoluble contradiction between history as a search for identity and history as a search for objective truth'.[43] Furthermore, as she states, and as the foregoing discussion demonstrates, each side is convinced of its own objectivity and the failure of the other side's claims on the standard of truth, leaving us again at an impasse.[44]

Before we attempt to address these knotty issues, some points need to be clarified. It is apparent that the rejection of Kashmiriyat, particularly in the form in which it presents Islam in Kashmir as influenced by Hinduism, is a reaction against casting Kashmir in Hindu, and thereby Indian, terms. The antecedents of this can be traced, as discussed earlier, to the nineteenth century, when the Dogra state, European orientalists, and Indian nationalists classified Kashmir as a font of Sanskrit and Hindu civilization. This has been exacerbated by the Indian state's political and intellectual repression of Kashmiris since independence, and more recently, by Kashmiri Pandit organizations, which celebrate Kashmir as a Hindu entity, while decrying the advent of Islam as an invasive force on Kashmir's landscape. But just because the position is understandable does not necessarily make it defensible, particularly when it too in fact abuses the past for dogmatic reasons. Kashmiriyat is a bankrupt academic

concept, but one cannot use its rejection as a means to erase centuries of inter-religious, inter-regional, and multi-linguistic interactions that have shaped Kashmir in the past and continue to shape it in the present.

As we have seen in this book, the Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions were deeply intertwined in Kashmir and were critical to the definition of the entity of Kashmir as place. There was no necessary correlation between Hinduism and the Sanskrit tradition and Islam and the Persian tradition, even as late as the late nineteenth century. Suggesting this does not imply that Kashmiri culture was syncretistic, and that Kashmir has a necessary kinship with India, but rather that the inhabitants of Kashmir at various historical moments built on traditions that came before to participate in a continuous narrative culture. The content of that narrative culture and the definitions of Kashmir that it propounded changed depending on the context and the particular interventions made by individual texts to reshape that context. Most importantly, there was a recognition of an interconnected tradition of narrating and writing about Kashmir's past in multiple languages that was simultaneously universal and particular, definitions of which also changed over the centuries. Even if parts of this tradition were questioned as problematic and sought to be redefined by earlier authors, there was no attempt to erase them by claiming that they belonged to the realm of myth rather than history.

Underlying the attempts at writing and rewriting Kashmir's past, thus, lies the question of how the Kashmiri nation itself is to be imagined in the present. The past provides an accessible repository on which the proponents of oppositional claims to Kashmir's national identity can draw to make their territorial claims. And it seems that the context of the insurgency has led to a focus, even amongst secular Kashmiris, whether Pandit or Muslim, on religion as a means of expressing that identity, thus also rendering the conflict irresoluble. Religious identity itself within these groups, at the same time, is a matter of contention. In some ways, this makes it easy for the Indian state and public opinion to dismiss the genuine political and economic grievances of the Kashmiri people, which lie at the heart of the Kashmiri insurgency.

Kashmiri nationalism's reading of Kashmir's past does not have to be a syncretistic one, but it clearly has to be driven by more than an assertion of singular religious identities, or else it runs the risk of becoming a story of Hindu–Muslim antagonisms. As Yasmin Saikia puts it so well, 'The collective memory that transcends official history must be more than a site of remembrance for creating identity in the present; it must have … an "ethical dimension" … and dare to remember the lofty successes as well as the sordid misdeeds of a community'.[45]

The Future of History in Kashmir

So what role can academic historians play in the Kashmiri context, particularly in terms of restoring an 'ethical dimension' to a study of its past? For better or worse, the discipline of history in Kashmir is squarely located within the realm of the popular/political. Nonetheless, it does not have to be driven by ideological agendas, for there have to be better ways of engaging with the present than trumpeting one's own historical narrative as the objective truth. Indeed, as Menon argues, we need to destabilize the notion of 'true' history, presenting it instead as 'a series of conversations and mutually contested narratives, with no possibility of ultimate resolution or verifiability, based on certain disciplinary codes'.[46]

However, one can argue that it is these very disciplinary codes that prevent academic history from engaging at an equal level with other forms of conversation with the past, such as those within the Kashmiri narrative public, which it dismisses as myth. Therefore, if academic history is to become truly relevant, it has to recognize its own antecedents and location within a much longer tradition of narrating the past. Hayden White has argued that 'history as a discipline is in bad shape today because it has lost sight of its origins in the literary imagination'. Most importantly, 'if historians were to recognize the fictive element in their narratives', it 'would serve as a potent antidote to the tendency of historians to become captive of ideological preconceptions which they do not recognize as such but honor as the "correct" perception of "the way things

really are"'.[47] History in Kashmir, whether it claims to be academic or popular, has become so invested in fact, truth, and 'the way things really were', that its ideas have ceased to resonate with people's sense of place and time. Instead, they have become handmaids to ideological and political agendas largely driven by territorial understandings of the Kashmir issue which are then forced on the people by partisan groups.

Academic history in Kashmir has unlimited potential, since so many arenas of Kashmir's past remain uncharted, and there is an abundance of largely untapped textual and oral sources in multiple languages beyond state archives that are accessible to scholars. However, ideology masquerading as history has not only bankrupted the discipline as a whole, but has also relegated large periods of Kashmir's pre-modern past to darkness, which are seen as being of little import to the political struggle. Rather than designating early periods of Kashmir's past as unimportant and actively undermining the Kashmiri narrative public, academic history has an ethical obligation to nurture and learn from the ways in which people have interacted with (and continue to) with the past in this domain. These ways of communicating with the past are not driven primarily by territoriality or religious affiliation, but rather by a local sense of place and people through their participation in larger and longer moral and cultural communities.

This, in my view, would not render history-writing apolitical or suspend its ability to render meaningful causal explanations, but instead make it genuinely responsive to the needs of the political moment in Kashmir. The distinctions between 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' periods and identities, as well as a focus on territory, are built into the very foundations of the modern discipline of history as it emerged in the subcontinent;[48] this process began in Kashmir at the turn of the twentieth century and was crystallized in the postcolonial period. As a result, engaging with the multiplicity of alternate narratives and voices within the narrative public would allow the discipline to narrativize the past in ways that are less divisive and more in sync with Kashmir's location and celebration at the intersection of the local and the universal in its narrative tradition. Perhaps then, as it re-centres its attention on place rather than

territory, on the literary rather than factual, academic history can redefine the political by moving beyond the shibboleths that have shaped discussions of the Kashmir issue.

Kashmir, after all, sits astride and connects multiple regions of the world, and it has drawn amply from each of them in terms of people, language, ideas, and constructions of identity. Its past—and indeed its present—cannot be shaped simply by particularistic definitions of territory and people that are located solely within the framework of singularly and exclusively defined national identities, whether Indian, Pakistani, or Kashmiri. I hope that this book contributes to an understanding of the sheer diversity of voices that have shaped Kashmir's past, and indeed the very idea of Kashmir itself, thus helping us to imagine a more inclusive future for the region and its people.

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[1] Interview with Balraj Puri, Jammu, 13 March 2010.

[2] P. Chatterjee, 'Introduction', in Aquil and Chatterjee (2008), p. 22. While Chatterjee presents these publics as challenging the unified domain of academic history, I suggest here instead that academic history is one of the heterogeneous publics to emerge recently in Kashmir that is fracturing the more unified domain of the Kashmiri narrative public.

[3] P. Chatterjee, 'Introduction', in Chatterjee and Ghosh (2002), p. 15.

[4] Ibid., p. 17. History and politics have been deeply entwined at the national level too, which is especially apparent in the fierce debates over the events and personalities surrounding independence and partition. The most recent controversy over this subject erupted around the publication of Jaswant Singh's book, entitled, *Jinnah: India-Partition-Independence* (2009). Singh made the cardinal error of suggesting that Jinnah may not have been solely responsible for partition, and that the leaders of the Congress, such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel, may have also been culpable. He was ousted from the BJP as a result and the book was banned in Gujarat.

[5] Menon (2004), p. 23.

[6] P. Chatterjee, 'Introduction', in Chatterjee and Ghosh (2002), p. 5.

[7] Chakrabarty, 'History and the Politics of Recognition', in Ghosh, Guha-Thakurta, and Nair (2011), p. 26.

[8] Ibid., pp. 30–1.

[9] Menon (2004), p. 24.

[10] P. Chatterjee, ‘Introduction’, in Chatterjee and Ghosh (2002), p. 18.

[11] The blurring of the boundaries between the academic and popular domains in shaping public discourse in situations of conflict has been palpable in the cases of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as well. For Sri Lanka, see Spencer (1990); for Bangladesh, see Saikia (2011).

[12] Writing of the uses of the past in creating Sinhala identity in the context of the conflict in modern Sri Lanka, Serena Tennekoon notes that ‘the ethnic polarization of the present is defined in terms of past rivalries, and in that process, the past itself is rearranged in terms of the policies of the present’. See Tennekoon, ‘Newspaper Nationalism’, in Spencer (1990), p. 220.

[13] Ahmed (2011) (http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Jul/13/whose-martyrs--2.asp, accessed 29 May 2012). See also another op-ed on the same day: Iqbal (2011) (http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Jul/13/the-question-stays--3.asp, accessed 31 May 2012), in which the author ‘visits the past only to tell us that the present is perhaps no different’.

[14] Anon., ‘KPs Observe Martyrs’ Day as “Black Day”’, in *State Times* (2010) (http://www.statetimes.in/news/kps-observe-martyrs’-day-as-’black-day’, accessed 30 May 2012).

[15] Peer (2010), p. 158.

[16] Waheed (2011).

[17] It is noteworthy that Kashmiriyat, at least as envisaged by the Jammu and Kashmir state in the 1950s, rendered Kashmir exceptional within the Indian subcontinent, and hence was used by the Kashmiri leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, to assert its independence from both the Indian and Pakistani states.

[18] Majboor, Bashir, Saqi, ‘Preface’, in Kalhana, trans. Majboor, Bashir, and Saqi, vol. I (2005), p. be.

[19] See, for instance, Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001).

[20] See, for instance, Jonaraja, trans. Ahmed (2007); Fauq, trans. Bharti (2009).

[21] Kondoo, ‘Taruf’, in Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), pp. xxxiv–xxxv.

[22] Ahmed, ‘Translator’s Note’, in Jonaraja, trans. Ahmed (2007), pp. 7–59.

[23] Kondoo, ‘Taruf’, in Dyadmari, trans. Ahmed (2001), pp. xxxv, xlv–xlvi.

[24] Ahmed, ‘Translator’s Note’, in Jonaraja, trans. Ahmed (2007), p. 11.

[25] Ibid., pp. 30–1.

[26] See, for instance, Gadoo (2005–2006), pp. 99–103. The *Vitasta*, in which this article appears, is the journal of the Kashmir Sabha, Kolkata.

[27] Ashraf (2008) (http://www.kashmirfirst.com/articles/history/080601_institute_kashmir_studies.htm, accessed 21 May 2012).

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ashraf (2008).

[30] Anon., 'Fettered Scholarship' (2008).

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ganai (2006).

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ganai (2006).

[35] Ashraf (2008).

[36] Interview with Shaad, Bijbehara, Kashmir, 27 September 2009.

[37] Junaid (2008) (http://www.countercurrents.org/junaid020708.htm, accessed 21 May 2012).

[38] Rasool (2011), p. 48 (http://www.conveyormagazine.com/, accessed 22 May 2012).

[39] Rasool (2011), p. 49.

[40] Ibid., p. 48.

[41] Junaid (2008).

[42] As Tennekoon notes with reference to the uses of the past in the Sri Lankan conflict, 'History/myth is of the past but not in that past; it is rooted and flourishes in the present'. Tennekoon, 'Newspaper Nationalism', in Spencer (1990), p. 220.

[43] Menon (2004), p. 10.

[44] Ibid., p. 14.

[45] Saikia (2011), p. 9.

[46] Menon (2004), p. 24.

[47] White, 'The Historical Text as Literary Artifact', in Roberts (2001), p. 235.

[48] On this point, see P. Chatterjee (1992), pp. 111–49.

CONCLUSION

This book began as a quest to understand what made Kashmir unique in terms of historical production. Why was it designated as the only home of historical production in South Asia in the Sanskrit language? What allowed *Rajatarangini*, which bore a number of signs of a positivist historical text, to be written in Kashmir when the rest of the subcontinent seemed to display no historical consciousness? Once I began to delve into these questions and conducted preliminary research in Kashmir, however, I quickly realized that these questions were framed not only by colonial ideas about historical writing in South Asia, but also nationalist and postcolonial concerns about claiming Kashmir into the Indian historical and nationalist imaginations. I also discovered that Kashmir had a rich tradition of historical composition following *Rajatarangini*, both in Sanskrit and Persian. While these texts had long been used as sources to construct the narrative of Kashmir's history, they had not been granted the status of actual histories, being categorized instead as fanciful, irrational, and imitative. As Daud Ali argues, this tendency to regard pre-modern narratives as not much more than sources of facts, 'unwittingly emptied them of the "historical life" that they actually contained'.[1]

This book has attempted to resurrect the 'historical life' of the Persian *tarikh*s and *tazkira*s of Kashmir. In the process, it has brought to light a vibrant, multilingual, and interconnected tradition of historical narration through the centuries that adds another layer to our understanding of the variety of ways in which the past was constructed and presented to multiple audiences in pre-modern and modern South Asia. Instead of distilling the 'historical' from the 'mythical' within these narratives, I have analysed the internal narrative conventions of individual texts as coherent entities on their

own terms and in conversation with each other as they placed themselves within a longer tradition of historical composition. The book highlights that these texts drew their narrative conventions and modes of authenticity from the Sanskrit tradition of literary-historical composition and the oral and performance arenas of the Kashmiri narrative public in the Kashmiri vernacular, which themselves drew from a range of Persian and Kashmiri textual narratives. The close symbiosis between these elements within the narrative public allowed for the creation, consumption, and dissemination of memories about the land and its past by, and amongst, court writers, pirs, hospice managers, storytellers, and ordinary men and women.

A primary motivation for historical composition in Kashmir was to articulate the meaning of the entity of Kashmir itself, which in turn shaped the narration of its own past. Through a dialogue with the preceding Sanskrit tradition, and textual and oral traditions across the centuries, the historical tradition framed Kashmir in multiple ways: as a discursive Islamic space; as a specific territorial entity with marked borders; and as a mulk located in regional, universal, and global contexts. The late-sixteenth-century tarikhs and tazkiras, as discussed in Chapter 1, were vernacular texts in that they were particularly critical to the definition of Kashmir as a sacred, Islamic space, an idea which suffused subsequent textual and oral traditions. For the sixteenth-century texts, this was a critical aspect of establishing the historical narrative of Kashmir's transition to Islam in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries through the activities of particular Sufi mystics, as well as the narrative of the emergence of the Kashmiri Sultanate in relation to these activities. The narration of Kashmir's past as an Islamic entity allowed their authors, primarily Sufi hospice managers, to negotiate the relationship amongst a variety of Sufi sects, and between spiritual and temporal authority in the present.

The incorporation of Kashmir into the Mughal Empire at the end of the sixteenth century provided fresh impetus to historical composition, as historical narratives marked Kashmir out as a distinct territorial entity within the Mughal Empire. As we have seen in Chapter 2, these narratives self-consciously discussed the purpose and mode of historical narration through comparisons with

the earlier tradition of historical composition in Sanskrit and Persian. In the process, the eighteenth-century narratives in particular, asserted Kashmir's position as a separate mulk with well-defined natural and political boundaries. While universally lamenting the conquest of Kashmir, their narration of the events leading up to the conquest and their relationship to Mughal rule itself was far more ambiguous, and provides a glimpse into their attempts at negotiating inter-sectarian, inter-political rivalries in the present. Nineteenth-century Kashmir's tarikhs continued to display a vernacular flavour as they self-confidently narrated the past of the well-defined entity of Kashmir, as discussed in Chapter 3. By this point, Kashmir had emerged as the product of its long historical tradition, at the same time as it dictated the narration of its own interconnected geographical, spiritual, political, and literary pasts. In addition, the entity was now defined not only as a place, but also by its people.

As a whole, the book argues for the vernacularity of Persian in the Kashmiri context. It thus presents the case of a cosmopolitan language replacing another cosmopolitan language in the age of vernacularization to act in a vernacular capacity in a region of South Asia. Persian narratives, as we have seen throughout this book, while located in trans-local literary and sacred worlds, were crucial to shaping the contours of Kashmir as place. Indeed, this is what lent a measure of universalism to the act of defining a specific, local space, which was thus rendered at once unique and universal. A constant dialogue between the local, regional, universal, and by the nineteenth century, global, shaped the narratives' modes of authenticity and narration, as well as their ideas about the purpose of historical composition itself.

The book illustrates that this deeply intertwined relationship between the universal and the local is most apparent in the transactions between the cosmopolitan vernacular (Persian) and the regional vernacular (Kashmiri) through the co-mingling of textual and oral spheres. This is what gave vernacular history in nineteenth-century Kashmir an entirely different texture than in other parts of India. Not only were histories of Kashmir in this period written in Persian, but the narratives continued to locate themselves within a regional historical tradition and draw on oral and textual traditions in

Kashmiri, while at the same time being in conversation with multiple and divergent ideas of history-writing.

Defining and laying claim to landscape and space(s), the book thus argues, was a critical feature of the Persian narratives' historiographical practice. Multiple ideas of space—sacred, political, and territorial—came together with legendary and historical temporality to shape the narrative movement within these texts. The origin stories of Kashmir not only fused hybrid temporalities with a variety of spatial concepts within individual narratives, but also provided coherence and continuity to the historical tradition through the centuries. An eclectic mixture of oral and textual traditions in multiple languages, these stories allowed for the imbrication of universal, regional, and local tropes in narrations of Kashmir's emergence from water. The entity thus created was endowed with a divinity that rendered it eternal. The genealogies of the land and its narrative tradition were thus closely entwined within historical narration.

Stories in general, starting with the origin stories, but also stories about Sufi mystics and indigenous saints and their travels across Kashmir, stories about rulers and their activities, and numerous other stories about Kashmir's changing landscape, formed the framework around which these narratives were structured. This is also what so seamlessly brought together the textual and oral domains of the Kashmiri narrative public and allowed for the participation of a wide cross-section of society in the creation of historical memories about the land, as we saw in Chapter 5. Even as late-nineteenth-century narratives adopted a new, more factual historical idiom to narrate Kashmir's past as they came in touch with the colonial historical method, their authors defended their right to, as historians, continue to use a picturesque and storytelling style in their compositions. The power and longevity of these stories is apparent from the fact that even today—despite the attempts by certain sections of the press and publications market to denigrate them as ahistorical—most Kashmiris continue to remember and understand their past through myths, idioms, and stories, including —and especially—the story of their land's emergence from a lake through divine intervention.

There was little distinction within the Kashmiri narrative public between history and memory as a means of engaging with the past. For the textual narratives, the past was both a set of factual events that took place in chronological time that needed to be recorded, but equally importantly, it was the memory of a tradition of recounting the past, which was not necessarily marked by historical temporality. Their legitimacy thus derived not from proximity to facts, but rather from proximity to tradition, partly through auctours or informants—ranging from Sufi saints, their disciples, and spiritual guides such as pirs—all of whom were responsible for preserving the memory of traditions about the land and its past. Similarly, storytellers and other performers were endowed with divine sanction by a close association with Sufi shrines and pirs, which lent an inviolability to their performances and oral narrations that went far beyond factual forms of legitimacy. This is not to suggest that the texts suspended chronological facts, or that they did not recognize other texts as valid sources for constructing the past. Instead, their authors saw the task of historical composition as a commemoration—of the past of the land, its mystics, its rulers, as well as its narrative tradition.

The commemoration of the past, as we have seen throughout the book, was rooted in diverse institutional contexts, and carried out in a variety of genres—such as poetry, prose, and hagiography—which blended into each other within individual narratives. As in the Sanskrit tradition of historical composition, the line between history and literature was indistinct in the Persian historical tradition, as was the line between history and hagiography, since it drew on the conventions of literary and mystical composition. As a result, the book has demonstrated that most narratives simultaneously and self-consciously performed multiple roles, such as for instance the eighteenth-century *Bagh-i Sulaiman*, which is a versified historical narrative of Kashmir as a whole, as well as a battle poem, a sort of memoir, and a hagiography of the divines of Kashmir. At the same time, depending on their institutional locations and socio-political objectives, individual authors chose to emphasize specific qualities within their narratives, which they presented as performing very particular roles.

Although the book focuses on the Persian tradition of historical composition in Kashmir, *Rajatarangini*, and the Sanskrit tradition as a whole, casts a long shadow on it. The book highlights the profound influence of the Sanskrit literary-historical tradition, embodied in particular by the *Rajatarangini*s, on Persian tarikhs and tazkiras. Moreover, it illustrates the impact of the resurrection of Kashmir's Sanskrit tradition in the context of orientalist projects in the nineteenth century on the Persian historical tradition. As we have seen, Persian historical texts were deeply engaged with the *Rajatarangini* narratives long before European orientalists 'discovered' Kalhana's twelfth-century text as the only text in the Sanskrit language that was worthy of being labelled a history. Even after this discovery and the dissemination of ideas related to the new colonial historical method, nineteenth-century historical writing in Persian carried on its own project of constructing Kashmir's past that included a parallel dialogue with Sanskrit, Persian, Kashmiri, and Urdu texts, as well as creating an indigenous repository of legitimate sources for narrating Kashmir's history.

Nonetheless, as discussed at length in Chapter 4, the *Rajatarangini* project in nineteenth-century Kashmir led by European Indologists and orientalists such as Georg Buhler and M. A. Stein, rent asunder the deep relationship between the Sanskrit and Persian narrative traditions. In part, this was the result of categorizing them as two distinct literary entities, rather than as parts of an interconnected narrative tradition. Moreover, the project accorded primacy to the Sanskrit tradition, while labelling the Persian tradition as inferior and as an interpolation on Kashmir's classical landscape. Coupled with other factors, this led to the decline of Persian as a literary language and the Persian historical tradition in particular by the early twentieth century. Despite this obvious epistemological violence, the book argues that the orientalist project of knowledge production in Kashmir was far more nuanced, and was formulated in dialogue with indigenous intermediaries. While these intermediaries were no doubt considered inferior, they were scarcely marginal to the project because they suffused it with knowledge drawn from indigenous—including the Persian—traditions.

Moreover, a focus on the *Rajatarangini* project allows the book to bring to light the complex process through which the text came to acquire the exalted status that it holds in contemporary India, in the scholarly and popular imagination alike. More significantly, it illustrates how this process gave concrete shape to *Rajatarangini* as a single text, thereby deracinating it from its regional context, particularly from Kashmir's narrative tradition, and incorporated it into the literary and historical heritage of India. This, in turn, became a means to appropriate Kashmir—the region itself—into the nationalist narrative of India's past. Kalhana's text, as the only legitimate Sanskrit history, could not only serve as a source for establishing the Indian historical narrative, particularly in its ancient period, but also stand in as an example of an Indian historical consciousness. As a result, *Rajatarangini* lost its resonance as a text from Kashmir that could serve as a national symbol for the early-twentieth-century Kashmiri nationalist movement, although the oral arenas of the narrative public were (and continue to be) replete with stories from the Sanskrit narratives.

At the same time, the book argues that orientalist and Indian nationalist engagements with *Rajatarangini* were too layered and complex for it to be judged merely based on the criteria of a positivist historical text. Not only were orientalist and nationalist responses to the text informed by each other, but individual engagements illuminate the debates regarding definitions of history and its relationship to literature, as well as region and nation, that were raging in colonial India at the turn of the twentieth century. Kashmir, as the home of and through Kalhana's text, was drawn into these debates, which illustrate that even at the height of the acceptance of history as a rational, scientific endeavour, alternate definitions of history abounded. As such, nationalists claimed *Rajatarangini* as embodying not the dry history of facts and figures, but the true historical spirit of the literary and cultural heritage of a nation and its people. Orientalists such as M. A. Stein, on the other hand, designated the text as an example of a regional narrative that encapsulated the distinctiveness of Kashmir as well as its history and historical tradition.

The book has illustrated that historical narration in Kashmir—a combination of remembering and forgetting—was and continues to be a deeply political enterprise driven by the contemporary moment. At all times, historians and a variety of historical narrators drew their legitimacy not from the state, but from being heirs to a well-established tradition, which they sought to participate in, continue, and transform through their own texts. In contemporary Kashmir, however, battles over history and identity, as we have seen in Chapter 6, are framed in terms of a break from earlier traditions, which are designated as unfounded superstitions of the people, rather than as legitimate ways of engaging with the past. At the same time, the narratives that put forward this view are themselves driven by the need to claim Kashmir's past to make political demands on behalf of its people in the present.

I suggest that history-writing has the potential to have a salutary impact on the deeply riven public discourse, if it takes on the responsibility of nurturing and drawing lessons from the multiple ways of engaging with the past that have formed the essence of Kashmir's historical tradition. Instead of valorizing a singular version of the past as historical truth to advance particular ideological agendas, history-writing can render itself truly sensitive and responsive to the political needs of the present by recognizing the interconnected genealogies of Kashmir's past and by becoming a part of its layered narrative tradition.

Ultimately, this book illustrates that the inhabitants of Kashmir have been active participants in the interlinked process of shaping the contours of Kashmir, and the construction of its, as well as their own, past. This has endowed them with the power to negotiate the position of a relatively small entity within much mightier empires. Whether defined as an abode of blessings, a home for Hindu sages, a sacred space created by Sufi mystics, a polity, or a combination of all these ideas, for its inhabitants, Kashmir has always been, and continues to be, the centre of the universe—a paradise on earth. Dismissing these understandings as superstitions, in the name of impartial history and fact, does real violence to Kashmiris' sense of belonging to a land and a community of people.

[1] Ali (2013), p. 256.

GLOSSARY

awliya	friends of God; Sufi mystics
bayyat	spiritual initiation (usually into a Sufi order)
bhand	performer (also known as *bhaggat*), usually of the street theatre tradition
bhand pether	street theatre tradition
chashma	spring of water; also known as *nag*
dastaan	epic story
dastaan goh	storyteller
Hadith	Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, which includes a compilation of his sayings and actions
hakim	healer
jagir	a land grant given by the state to a shrine or an individual, who had the right to assess and collect land revenue from the piece of land
jinn	divine beings in Islamic mythology; sometimes identified as helpers of particular prophets
karkun	Kashmiri Pandit scribes and bureaucrats
katib	scribe
kavya	poetry; refers to a literary style or genre within Sanskrit poetry from the second half of the first millennium, characterized by concepts of poetic emotion, affect, and suggestion
khalifa	spiritual successor of a Sufi saint
khanqah	Sufi hospice, shrine, or residence of a saint
ladishah	minstrel; satirical poem sung by a minstrel
mahatmya	pilgrimage manual associated with particular pilgrimage sites and routes

makhtab	school run by mullahs; also referred to as a *madrasa*
mansab	imperial rank accorded to his nobles by the Mughal Emperor
masnavi	narrative poem or metrical romance
mir munshi	chief secretary
mulk	homeland and/or country
mullah	title given to Muslim religious teacher learned in religious texts; also known as *moulvi*
murshid	spiritual guide
Naga	inhabitant of Kashmir prior to its emergence from water and settlement by Brahmans; serpent deity associated with its springs (*nag*)
parganah	district
pir	a religious elder associated with a shrine, a holy man roving the countryside, or a spiritual preceptor/guide
qasida	eulogy or purpose poem
qaum	a national or religious community
qissa	story or tale
razmiya	combat poetry, which usually describes the battles fought by the Prophet Muhammad in the early days of Islam
risala	epistle
Sayyid	a Muslim claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad
shruk	the verses of Nund Rishi (also known as Shaykh Nooruddin), a fifteenth-century mystic from Kashmir
subahdar	governor
tirtha	pilgrimage sites; divine crossings
vaakh	the sayings of Lal Ded, a fourteenth-century mystic from Kashmir
watan	homeland or nation

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